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Portrait of Victor Jacquemont, 1840

VICTOR JACQUEMONT

After a portrait by Madame Merimee, mother of Prosper Merimee, now
in the possession of the Jacquemont family

LETTERS FROM INDIA

1829-1832

Being a Selection from the Correspondence

of

VICTOR JACQUEMONT

Translated with an Introduction

by

CATHERINE ALISON PHILLIPS

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PREFACE

IN September 1834 a collection of letters was published in London under the title of *Letters from India, describing a journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore and Cashmere during the years 1828-1829-1831, undertaken by order of the French Government by Victor Jacquemont, travelling naturalist to the Museum of Natural History, Paris. . . . Translated from the French*, and met with success enough to justify the publication of a second and enlarged edition in May 1835.

The centenary of Victor Jacquemont's untimely death, which took place in Bombay on December 7, 1832, when he was only thirty-one years of age, has recently been celebrated at the Museum of Natural History, Paris, where a commemorative exhibition was held on May 27, 1933, under the auspices of the Académie des Sciences coloniales and the Société de l'Histoire des Colonies françaises. Speeches were made by a number of distinguished persons, including Sir Francis Younghusband as the representative of England, and a "Société des Amis de Jacquemont" was founded. The year 1934 saw the publication of a biography of Jacquemont by Monsieur Pierre Maes (who has also edited two volumes of his early correspondence and has others in preparation) and the issue of two volumes of extracts from his diary, with Introductions by M. Alfred Martineau of the Collège de France, ex-governor of French India; while a permanent exhibition in commemoration of Jacquemont is contemplated at the Colonial Museum, Vincennes.

It seems only fitting that in England, too, some tribute should be paid to the memory of this remarkably gifted young Frenchman, who for the last few years of his life was the honoured guest and intimate friend of the most distinguished among the Company's servants in India, and whose understanding and apprecia-

tion of Englishmen and English colonial government give him a lasting claim on our sympathies.

For Jacquemont's short life produced far more than his valuable, but necessarily limited contributions to natural science. His geological theories, says a recent French writer, Monsieur de Margerie, in some respects anticipate more modern theories. His pioneer work in classifying the Himalayan flora and fauna was, however, bound to be tentative and incomplete. But as artist and letter-writer, as an acute observer of Indian conditions at an interesting period and in unique circumstances, and as a singularly lovable and many-sided personality, he deserves to have his memory kept green.

Seven volumes of Jacquemont's correspondence have already appeared, while others are in preparation. Four of these consist mainly of his letters from India, so it is obvious that a selection had to be made. The principle followed has been to include only those which, read in sequence, form a continuous narrative of his adventures, omitting all official reports, most references to French politics and personalities, and numerous letters consisting largely of repetition.

Considerations of space also make it impossible to include translations of the many passages from the diary which form a valuable supplement to the letters. But in a work intended chiefly for the general reader, and only secondarily for the student, it is unnecessary to be exhaustive. For similar reasons the published version of the correspondence has been translated as it stands, without any attempt to establish a word-perfect text.

It only remains for the translator to express her most cordial thanks to Monsieur Pierre Maes, whose generous advice and assistance have enormously simplified her task, to Monsieur Alfred Martineau, who has been so good as to lend photographs of some of Jacquemont's drawings, and to Major and Mrs. J. S. Lethbridge, who have travelled over much of the ground covered by Jacquemont and have kindly allowed her work to profit by their knowledge of Indian languages and conditions by reading it both in manuscript and in proof and drawing the maps.

EDITORS' NOTE

JACQUEMONT's original spelling is put in brackets after the correct spelling of a Hindustani name or word on the first occasion of the appearance of that word, *e.g.* JUBBAL [DJOUBOEUL]. If, however, his spelling approximates very nearly to the correct spelling it is left out entirely, *e.g.* AGRA is not followed by [AGRAH].

In general all Hindustani names and words have been spelt according to the Hunterian method. Certain Hindustani words, however, have become so anglicized that to adopt any but the accepted anglicized method of spelling them would appear affected, *e.g.* BEARER is not spelt BEHRA. In these cases the anglicized spelling has been used.

J. S. AND K. G. LETHBRIDGE

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INTRODUCTION

VICTOR JACQUEMONT was born in 1801 of an ancient family of Artois whose name occurs in the local records as far back as the thirteenth century, his ancestors, who belonged to the "*noblesse of the sword*", having held a number of small fiefs in the neighbourhood of Hesdin, and distinguished themselves in the Church, the law and public affairs.¹ He was reared in honourable traditions by a father, Venceslas Jacquemont, who was an idealist republican, a man of high character and an able public servant, and had suffered persecution for his opinions under the Consulate and Empire.

"When I was eight years of age," writes Victor to a friend, "some police, armed with an order from Fouché, came one Sunday and invaded our house; they carried off books and papers, searched everywhere for traces of a conspiracy, and then led my father away. For eleven months he remained shut up in a cramped, dark room which I shall remember all my life, having gone there twice a week during those months—that is, as often as was allowed. It was there that I learnt to read and write. . . . At last he came out, only to endure an exile which lasted as long as the Empire." It is hardly surprising that as long as he lived Victor remained a strong anti-Bonapartist.

But these dark days came to an end, and Venceslas Jacquemont returned from exile to devote himself to the education of his younger sons and the composition of a metaphysical treatise, *Les essences réelles*, which was, however, never to see the light. He belonged to the "*idéologue*" school of philosophy, of which Destutt de Tracy was the leading representative; and Victor and his elder brothers, Porphyre and Frédéric, were brought up in a rationalist and secularist atmosphere resembling that of the late eighteenth century. As with the later positivists, an active social

¹ The facts concerning Jacquemont's family, ancestry and career have been established by Monsieur Pierre Maes, on whose works this Introduction is mainly based (see List of Authorities, p. xxxi).

conscience and humanitarian views took the place of belief in religious dogma and revelation. These were combined with a belief in progress, "reason" and human perfectibility and with radical tendencies in politics. Victor Jacquemont grew up a sceptic with a tender heart, a sensitive conscience and a passion for philosophizing and psychological analysis.

His thoughtful tendencies were increased by ill-health; for at the age of sixteen, while working in the chemist Thénard's laboratory, he accidentally inhaled a poisonous gas and barely escaped with his life. His convalescence was spent largely at the old Marquis de La Fayette's country place, La Grange in Brie, for there was a connexion between the two families dating from the seventeenth century, and the old general, Jacquemont tells us, was like a second father to him. Here Victor had the great advantage of mixing with the distinguished cosmopolitan society gathered about the "hero of two worlds", and became interested in English literature and American institutions. For a long time after his accident he was forced to lead an open-air life, going on long walking and riding tours in France and Switzerland and taking up the study of botany, geology and agriculture, which, when his health enabled him to return to Paris, he continued at the Jardin des Plantes, of which Cuvier was then the head. Restored to normal health, he chose medicine as his profession and in 1822 became a medical student.

His leisure was spent in some of the most intellectual salons of the Restoration period, notably that of Madame de Tracy, of which Stendhal has left so vivid a picture in his diaries. He was one of the "happy few" who revolved round the great writer himself, and though he was twenty years Stendhal's junior, his social connexions and Parisian culture, aided by a good opinion of himself which he candidly admits, enabled him to meet his provincial friend on a footing of equality, and even of humorous patronage; while Stendhal thought highly enough of the young man's judgment to consult him during the composition of his treatise *De l'amour*.

Like Stendhal, Jacquemont was keenly sensitive to music,

sharing the distinguished critic's enthusiasm for Rossini and his admiration for the great singer Giuditta Pasta, for whom he did not fail to "crystallize", though not to a dangerous degree. But a far more serious "crystallization" awaited him and came near to wrecking his life. He fell passionately in love with a young Italian opera-singer, Adelaide Schiassetti; but though for a time she indulged in a romantic friendship with him, singing him his favourite Rossini arias, teaching him Italian, and reading Schiller, Shakespeare and Alfieri with him, she did not return his passion, and after a period of idyllic courtship, poetically reflected in his early letters, Jacquemont realized that his only salvation lay in uprooting from his heart a passion all the more insidious for being associated with his dearest artistic enthusiasms. His habit of ruthless self-analysis now stood him in good stead, but the struggle was a bitter one, and his family observed with grief that he was falling into an alarming state of apathy. At last his elder brother Porphyre advised him to go on a long voyage to the United States, generously offering him his savings to make this possible. "I am going to spend the winter in New York," wrote Victor to a friend. ". . . Once I am interested in something, once I desire something, I shall regain my self-command (*je me raurai moi-même*). . . ."

As a friend and kinsman of La Fayette's, Jacquemont was soon well launched in New York society, and was about to go on to Washington and study the practical workings of the republican Constitution which he admired, when an unprovoked insult from a swashbuckling compatriot, whom he was forced to challenge to a duel, made it impossible for him to remain in the United States. He sailed for Santo Domingo, where his second brother, Frédéric, was engaged in sugar-planting. Change of scene, the natural glories of the West Indies, and possibly, too, the fascinations of the quadroon ladies, to which neither he nor his brother was insensible, soon restored his interest in life, and he was prepared to listen favourably to a proposal which now reached him through his father:

"The Jardin des Plantes", he wrote to a friend, "had a naturalist

travelling for it in India, M. Guyart, who recently left its service to enter that of the Dutch Government. This post is vacant. The Jardin des Plantes, which would like a fresh exploration made of that land and wants it done in style, is extending its travelling naturalist's scope and providing him with considerable additional advantages of every kind, thus turning M. Guyart's somewhat insignificant post into a most important mission."

In view of Jacquemont's travels in an English-speaking country and his recent introduction to tropical botany, his professors considered him very eligible for this post.

"The idea of this great journey seemed to me a most happy one," says the same letter, "especially considering my state of mind at the time. What I need is something great, strong and new. Though sorrow has extinguished so many faculties in me, I feel most strongly that it has also developed some which were hitherto only latent. . . . I should like to be a politician one day. I should like to be able to speak from the tribune. . . . This journey, and the literary and scientific reputation of which my account of it may perhaps lay the foundation, would bring about a change in my position."

After a short tour of the north-eastern states of the Union he sailed for France, prepared to take up his mission:

"The most useful thing I am bringing back with me for the future", he writes to the same friend, "is a knowledge of English. No doubt I speak it very badly, but at any rate I speak it."

Before he started for India it was considered advisable for him to visit London and get into personal touch with the Court of Directors of the East India Company. He did not arrive there an absolute stranger. He travelled with his old friend General de La Harpe, Madame Pasta was singing at the Opera, and in addition to his official introductions from Cuvier he had letters to various notabilities from La Fayette, the Duc de Broglie and Baron Gérard, the painter. He could also count upon the good offices of Sutton Sharpe, a barrister with a "silent and gothic retreat" in Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, who was an intimate friend of Stendhal's and an admirer of Cuvier's step-daughter, Sophie Duvaucel.

Sutton Sharpe took active steps to interest Sir Alexander Johnston, Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society, in his mission, and Sir Alexander, having immediately "fallen in love" with him, as Victor reported to Sutton Sharpe, introduced him to the Society and obtained his election as a corresponding member.

At first Jacquemont found some difficulty in obtaining his passports, and wrote to Sutton Sharpe: "It seems to me that at India House they are trying to put a spoke in my wheel".

"For this", says an article in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* for February 1834,¹ "Jacquemont was probably as much to blame as the Directors. . . . They probably doubted the object of his mission, regarding him either as a Russian emissary or the bearer of some secret treaty to Ranjit Singh and the rulers of the Afghans; he, perhaps, was less explanatory than he should have been, especially with persons to whom scientific missions are by no means familiar."

The suspicion was a natural one, for a former French officer, M. Allard, had entered the service of Ranjit Singh and was engaged in training his army on the European model.

However, Jacquemont made an excellent impression at a dinner given by the Society at the Thatched House, where he and Wilhelm von Humboldt were the guests of honour.

"After all the official toasts," he wrote to Sutton Sharpe, "M. Johnston, who was in the chair, proposed his health and he responded with a short speech in English. Next he did me the same honour and I replied, or rather tried to reply in the same way; for I was really moved, and my small stock of English eluded my memory."

All difficulties were now smoothed away and on July 1 Sir Alexander Johnston handed him official letters of introduction from the Court of Directors to all governors of the British possessions in India, backed up by warm personal recommendations from himself.

Before visiting England Jacquemont had been full of the customary French prejudices, expecting to meet with none but

¹ Quoted in the Introduction to the 1835 edition of *Letters from India*.

"new and very cold faces and minds devoid of grace". He returned with rather a different impression, though without, as yet, any real sympathy for the English.

"I have come back", he writes, "so enchanted with the English in London that I expect to have every possible cause for satisfaction with those whom I see in India. Besides, I have had an important experience in London. I have learnt that I am capable of making myself liked by men of that nation. The curious thing is that, in spite of this, I could never succeed in finding them *amiable*. I mean *agreeable*, for so far as being amiable in the sense of *likable* is concerned, I know more than one to whom I shall be attached for all the rest of my life. I spoke their language fairly well and was not conceited, and they seemed to give me great credit for these modest merits."

The best impression of Victor Jacquemont's appearance and personality at the time when he left for India is that given by Prosper Mérimée in his Introduction to the *Correspondance inédite*, first published by him in 1867:

"Victor Jacquemont", he writes, "was very tall. He was five feet ten inches in height and seemed even taller, for he was thin and had a small head. His brow was partly hidden by his long, dark chestnut hair, which curled naturally. He had dark grey eyes, and since he was very short-sighted, his glance appeared a little vague. As for the expression of his face, this varied so much that it was hard to define, and opinions on the subject were very much divided; some considered that he had a frank and engaging address, others maintained that his bearing was haughty and ill-humoured. For my own part, I should have had rather a poor opinion of those who held the latter opinion, for I should have concluded that Jacquemont was bored with them. As a matter of fact, I never knew anybody so clever at hiding his feelings as he was. He was amiable and a charming talker with those whom he liked, but he could be taciturn and absent-minded with those for whom he felt any dislike. With the former he displayed a sort of amiable anxiety to please, he 'laid himself out to be agreeable', to use an expression of his own (*faisait des frais*), and easily succeeded in

interesting them and winning their confidence. Others saw too clearly that they bored him, and took a dislike to him. . . .

"His way of making people like him was to hide none of his ideas or feelings, but to be perfectly natural. Few people are insensible to such frankness when it is accompanied by an original mind and a sound education. I have sometimes heard him accused of a tendency to paradox. In my opinion this was not a fault of his. On the contrary, in all discussions in which he took part he was on the side of truth, or at least believed himself to be; but he often gave an odd turn to his thoughts which might mislead those who pay more attention to form than matter. The charm of his mind lay precisely in the fact that it was never far-fetched or affected. I may add that the remarkably pleasant timbre of his voice may have had something to do with his success as a conversationalist. I have never heard a voice more naturally musical. When I heard him speak, I was reminded of these words of Shakespeare's:

O it came o'er my ear like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets.

I have no intention of forgetting his faults. Silliness—and especially stupidity—was peculiarly exasperating to him. He could not endure it, and it made him angry. Beyle, who, though himself most intolerant of these qualities, had rather more consideration for people's feelings, blamed him for becoming seriously annoyed with people who had the misfortune to be stupid. 'Do you imagine', he added, 'that they do it on purpose?' 'I really don't know', replied Jacquemont in a surly voice. He would have agreed with Monsieur de M., who maintained that bad taste leads to crime..

"I have never known a more truly tender heart than Jacquemont's. His nature was loving and sensitive, but he took as much pains to conceal his emotions as other people do to hide their evil propensities. In our youth we had been shocked by the false sensibility of Rousseau and his imitators. A reaction had taken place, which, as usually happens, was carried to extremes. Our desire was to be strong, and we made fun of affected sensibility.

Perhaps Victor was involuntarily influenced by this tendency, which was common to his generation. Yet I believe that his impassive exterior was due less to fashion than to conviction. He was a stoic in the full sense of the word, not by nature but as the result of reason, and though he did not deny the existence of pain, he believed that a man ought always to find within himself strength to endure it, and make a constant practice of subduing self. More than once I have witnessed a combat between his nerves and his will, and I believe the victory cost him dear."

Jacquemont's original idea, suggested by Mountstuart Elphinstone's account of his mission to Kabul, had been, so he wrote to Baron Alexander von Humboldt, to "explore the whole valley of the Indus, from south of Multan to north of Kabulistan. But", he adds, "in London, where I have just spent a month, I . . . had no difficulty in convincing myself that the exploration of Kabul is, if not entirely impossible, at least far more difficult and risky than I had supposed; so without entirely giving up my project of visiting it, I once more began to consider the region proposed to me by M. Cuvier, that of the Malabar Coast and the Ghats. This region is no longer quite new to the naturalist, but little more than the seaboard has been explored. Moreover, the works of any size of which it has formed the subject are somewhat antiquated. . . . As for the geology of India, I venture to say, Monsieur, that till now the English have not told us very much about it. Not that I did not see quantities of cases full of rocks from that country in various collections in London; but they had been collected without either discrimination or system, and proved how little the travellers who collected them knew about geology. They were for the most part mere amateurs. . . ."

Jacquemont had written to Sir John Malcolm, at that time Governor of Bombay, asking his advice on the possibilities of the Indus valley project;¹ but should he receive an adverse reply, he proposed to proceed from Pondicherry to Calcutta, from which he would cross the country and make his way to Bombay, either "by way of Benares, Lucknow and Agra, or, more directly, by way of

¹ This letter is quoted in the Introduction to the 1835 edition of *Letters from India*.

Midnapur and Rattanpur, Mandla [Mundella] and the valley of the Narbada, along the left bank of which runs the Calyngong range [*i.e.* Mahadeo and Satpura ranges], which I should examine on my way". He expected "to return to Europe, by way of Persia, after spending several months on the shores of the Persian Gulf, which are also very little known".

These plans, as we shall see, were to be most romantically and unexpectedly modified.

Jaquemont's voyage out on board the French Government's corvette *La Zélée*—which, as he often complained, was quite unworthy of its name—lasted for more than six months. He sailed from Brest on August 26, 1828, and arrived at Pondicherry on March 6, 1829, touching on the way at Teneriffe, Rio de Janeiro, the Cape of Good Hope and the island of Bourbon (Réunion). But much as he chafed against the confinement of his "floating prison" and railed against the *Zélée's* propensity for running aground at every possible opportunity, the time was not wasted. He worked hard at Persian grammar, which was to stand him in very good stead later, and seized every opportunity of observing and comparing the government, administration and social conditions in the different colonies at which he touched.

It is impossible to include in the present selection the letters which he wrote home on the voyage, but they contain comparisons between the colonial methods of the Portuguese, French and English which are, it may be said, very much to the advantage of the English. For what he saw of the Portuguese régime in Brazil he felt nothing but contempt and disgust, while his national conscience suffered keenly from the corruption and inefficiency of the French administration at Réunion. Indeed, none of his subsequent criticisms of English methods could be so severe as what he wrote home to a friend on this subject from India: "At the Cape of Good Hope I was able to admire the wisdom and humanity of the English colonial importations, and in our wretched little island of Bourbon I was able to become thoroughly acquainted with the infamy and absurdity of our own. It remained to see their ridiculous and foolish side at Pondicherry, where I spent a fortnight: but

this was more than enough."—"Is it blind fate that has favoured the English?" he writes in his diary. "No. Their colonies owe their prosperity to the activity, industry, order—in fact, to the social superiority of the majority of the men who founded them, and their descendants."

Or again, he wrote to a friend on leaving the Cape: "Among them all the Englishman has the capacity for command. He governs less by force of bayonets than by his superior skill in commercial speculations and the management of the property he acquires, which, unnoticed by us in Europe, is gradually bringing into his hands all accumulated wealth, power and strength. Without war or violence, and by the peaceful exercise of its industry, this great nation is quietly becoming mistress of the rest of the world. Meanwhile Italy is sending singers to the capitals of North and South America, and France fencing-masters, dancing-girls, hair-dressers and milliners."

On May 25, 1829, Jacquemont at last arrived in Calcutta, where it so happened that he was immediately presented in a pleasant and informal way to the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, and his wife. Lady William Bentinck was fond of France and personally acquainted with the Duke and Duchess of Orleans (afterwards King Louis Philippe and his Queen), as well as with many of Jacquemont's friends in Paris, while the young foreigner's charm, intelligence and liberal views on politics soon won him Lord William's cordial friendship. He had arrived with a mass of introductions, both personal and official, to almost everyone of note, and the warm welcome given him by his first hosts, the Governor-General, the Advocate-General, John Pearson, the Chief Justice, Sir Charles Grey, and his successor, Sir Edward Ryan, at once made him a social success and secured him every possible facility for carrying out his work.

But in spite of all these advantages he found himself in an extremely painful position. The sum allotted him by the Jardin des Plantes for his expenses was so absurdly inadequate that, had it not been for the hospitality he enjoyed, his mission would have been rendered almost impossible. He was obliged to write home

to his family and friends at once, asking them to use all their influence to obtain an increase in his allowance. Again and again he returned to the charge, but communications were so slow that it was not till May 19, 1830, that he received a reply from the Jardin des Plantes, granting him a pitifully small increase. Though the July Revolution of 1830 brought his friends into power and made it easier to approach ministers successfully, it was not until the last year of his mission that he had at all adequate resources at his disposal.

Not only was this lack of means most disheartening to the young naturalist, but it seriously hampered his movements, and the fact that he was able to achieve what he did is proof of a courage, dignity and resolution that cannot be sufficiently admired. With the slenderest of equipments he crossed India from Calcutta to Delhi and pushed on into the Himalayas, penetrating as far as Ladakh and Spiti and even crossing the frontier of Tibet.

His remarks on what he saw and heard in Calcutta and on the road are as interesting and thoughtful as those of so intelligent an observer could not fail to be. One quotation from his diary may serve as an example of the suggestive generalizations in which his letters and journals are so rich:

"The English, who inspire so much respect in the natives of India by their power, strength, wealth and morality, it must be admitted (always true to their word, upright and just, ninety-nine times out of a hundred), who appear to them as a nation of princes, and receive from them so many Asiatically servile demonstrations of respect and submission, the English are the only European people that do not take a pleasure in these marks of respect. They esteem themselves too highly, they despise the coloured races too much, to be flattered by their homage. Their policy congratulates itself upon it, but never in the sincerity of their hearts does pride cause them to feel the need of it. A Frenchman among Indians says: 'I am the first'. An Englishman, a thousand times richer and more powerful, says: 'I am alone'."¹

He had, however, too little experience of either English or

¹ *Journal*, ed. Martineau, p. 169.

Indian customs and institutions always to arrive at sound conclusions, while his intellectual priggishness and characteristically French assumption of superiority sometimes led him into comical misunderstandings. Thus he considered the stupid, heartless English very remiss in taking no interest in what their servants had for dinner, and was only enlightened by the consternation of his own Hindu servants when he insisted upon inspecting their rice. Again, his rather eighteenth-century belief in the power of "reason" made him over-confident of its power to change the traditional beliefs and customs of the natives:

"The influence I have exerted upon the ideas of those in my service for several months past", he notes in his diary, "is proof in my eyes that, if the English in India established some social relations with the natives, they could, in the long run, modify their manners and improve them more powerfully by the gradual reform of their ideas than by legislation. I believe I have entirely discredited religious mendicancy in their minds."

Elsewhere, however, he expresses rather a different view in connexion with his remarks on the caste system:

"They [castes] are undoubtedly fatal to Indian societies in many respects. In my opinion they oppose an insurmountable barrier to any noteworthy change or important amelioration of the moral, or even physical condition of the Indians."

While he was on the borders of Tibet Jacquemont received an offer of assistance from M. Allard, Ranjit Singh's French general, which was a prelude to the most romantic episode in his travels—the one, indeed, which gives his letters and journals their permanent historical value. Ranjit Singh's territories were jealously closed to all Europeans except the few in his service, so Jacquemont's accounts of the Punjab and Kashmir and his personal impressions of Ranjit Singh himself and the leading men in his dominions are documents of real importance. "From the day of our first interview onwards", he writes to a friend, "[Ranjit] was really charming to me, though I always did my best to keep him in this excellent frame of mind. What a curious correspondence I kept up from Kashmir with this barbarian, on horseback day and

night, king by conquest of a rich and formidable people, a superstitious atheist, witty, a bit mad, unable either to read or write, yet knowing the name, position and history of from ten to twelve thousand villages in his kingdom."

His letters and diary are full of reflections upon native rule and the problems of governing barbarous and semi-barbarous races, some of which still have a value for those concerned with the questions which inevitably arise when Western ideas come in contact with Eastern ways of life. His conclusions on one of these questions, which is still a very live issue, are summed up in the following quotation from his diary:

"[Some European officials] desire the Government to apply itself to the task of elevating a polished, literate, educated class, enriched by the exercise of its talents, above the level of the people as a whole. Such is the object of those who favour the propagation of European knowledge among the natives. They say openly that English supremacy in Asia cannot be eternal, and that it is a duty to humanity to prepare India to govern herself by raising the moral and intellectual capacity of its inhabitants through a liberal education. And such is the reforming spirit of our times, that one often hears this language even on the lips of officials of the English Government. In my opinion it is very blind. If I thought that the foundation of English schools in the chief towns of India would be a means of hastening the fall of English power in these lands, I should certainly close these schools, for I have a deep-rooted conviction that no national Government would secure them the benefits which they owe to English government: peace both external and internal, and equal justice for all. It is better for the peoples of India to be governed by a foreign aristocracy belonging to a highly civilized country than by their own ignorant, cowardly and cruel one."

Jacquemont speaks severely about the extravagance, luxury and drunkenness of the English, their neglect to learn the native languages, and their lack of sympathy with the natives; and many of his criticisms were undoubtedly justified. But travel in an independent native state opened his eyes to many things, and in

recording the defects of the Company's administration—many of which were, of course, generally admitted and were ultimately to be reformed—he never fails to do justice to the benefits conferred upon India by British rule. One short quotation from his diary must again suffice to indicate his conclusions:

"Then I mused upon the benefits of English domination to the peoples of India which are subject to it, and invoked it in my most ardent prayers for these desolate provinces [the Punjab and Kashmir]. Not that I have not met, even in India, a number of enlightened Englishmen, able, owing to their position, to know the real condition of the peoples of English India better than I do, who question the benefit which the latter draw from European government. Their objections have never shaken my conviction, and I have no doubt that if they were to travel as I have done in the Punjab, outside all European influence, they would soon share my opinion."

Jacquemont's visit to Kashmir was his supreme adventure, and wise though he certainly was to refuse Ranjit Singh's offer of the "vicerealty", that potentate's munificence enabled him to travel without anxiety and form some valuable scientific collections.

"I sometimes think", he wrote a little later, "of the two *lakhs* a year offered me by Ranjit if I would do the 'bandobast' [*bandobaste*] in Kashmir: that is to say, collect the taxes by any means whatsoever, administer justice and keep guard over the country. From a less capricious king, and one who kept accounts better, I should have accepted them joyfully, for it would have been a magnificent opportunity for doing endless good, while at the same time making my fortune by putting aside half a *lakh* every year. I have never seen any other country in which power was any temptation to me, probably because it was the only one in which I have seen a chance of doing an enormous amount of good to a very large number of men in a very short time."

But when he left the Punjab and turned southward towards Bombay, a cloud began to settle upon his spirits. Thrown back upon his own meagre resources, he found life in the Bombay

Presidency twice as expensive as in northern India and all his calculations were upset again. He was not attracted by the dandified Lord Clare, then Governor of Bombay, and preferred not to accept his hospitality. The excessive hardships he had suffered on his expeditions into the Himalayas had undermined his health, and the southern climate depressed his vitality. The scientific excursions which he persisted in making into sweltering forests and valleys, often exposed to the full glare of the noonday sun, had disastrous results. The society of Poona, where he spent the rainy season of 1832, was very much inferior to that which had been open to him in the north, and he felt a growing sense of isolation. His thoughts turned more and more towards home, where the high hopes and ambitions which he had cherished at the time of the July Revolution were gradually being disappointed and the political situation caused him acute anxiety. Significantly enough, after January 2, 1832, his letter-book contains no record of any but strictly business letters to English correspondents. His attention was concentrated upon completing his researches and forwarding his specimens to the *Jardin des Plantes*, and his mind was already dwelling upon the arrangements for his return voyage. But the Indian climate which he had so rashly and confidently defied was to be his undoing.

While still in the Himalayas he had had a serious bout of illness, brought on by exposure and bad food, and in July 1832 an attack of dysentery nearly proved fatal to him. His straitened means denied him the regular use of wine to which he was accustomed, and he was forced to drink doubtful milk and polluted water. On the very day of his arrival in Bombay he was seized with weakness and violent attacks of pain. He was taken to the officers' hospital and found to be suffering from an abscess of the liver; and after a month of acute suffering, which he bore with heroic fortitude, he died on December 7, 1832. The newly appointed Chevalier of the Legion of Honour was buried with full military honours and followed to the grave by all the most distinguished persons in Bombay. His tombstone bore the modest inscription, composed by his own hand: "Victor Jacquemont, born in Paris on August 8,

1801, died at Bombay on December 7, 1832, after travelling in India for three and a half years".

The student of Indian history may appreciate not only Jacquemont's penetrating and stimulating observations on what he saw of India and its problems, but also the vivid portraits which he drew of the interesting persons with whom he came in contact. Lord William Bentinck, Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh, Shah Shuja, the versatile James Prinsep, James Skinner of Skinner's Horse, Lord Clare, the eccentric William Fraser, all live before us in his letters and diaries. As specimens of his skill in portraiture we may select two of these sketches from his diaries. Of Ranjit Singh's favourite and successor Gulab Singh, then Rajah of Jammu, he writes:

"He is a man of some forty years of age at most, of middle height and extreme beauty: a superb head, with long, curly black hair, an aquiline nose of extreme delicacy, great oval black eyes and a small mouth with perfectly cut lips. His proportions combine grace with adroitness and strength. His costume was most elegant, though at the same time very simple and soldierly: a small white turban of the finest muslin, tastefully rolled and raised over the left ear; a close-fitting tunic of the same stuff and the enormously full Sikh breeches, falling in a profusion of folds on the thigh and fitting closely round the knee, which they half-conceal. He wore no jewels save earrings and a necklace of magnificent pearls, but the handle of his sabre was covered with emeralds, rubies and diamonds. On his back was a great shield of glazed rhinoceros hide of a glossy black. . . ."

His description of the European dandy is no less lively:

"For the last year", he writes to M. de Melay, Governor of Pondicherry, with whom he had travelled out to India on the *Zélee*, "the Governor of Bombay has been the Earl of Clare, an English peer of Irish nationality, the companion and butt of Lord Byron at the University, Italian in appearance, and a bit of a dandy. He showers me with politenesses in French, and everything in French fashion, to the point of affectation. I far prefer Lord William's straightforward and unvarying simplicity. Lord

Clare desired to have me as his guest. I declined this inconvenient honour. A newcomer who has only been here a year, and, before coming here, was an exquisite of Naples, Florence and Vienna; who has remained a total stranger to the language of the Indians since his arrival; unaccustomed to affairs and with no natural talent (so it seems to me) for dealing with them; five feet two in height, and as thin as I am—if I were living with him, he would too often cause me to forget that he is the Governor. A governor should be either old or tall or stout or clever.”

But Jacquemont was an artist with brush and pencil, as well as with the pen. Before his tour in India he would have made no claim to artistic ability. But the facility he developed in the practical routine of sketching his botanical and other specimens tempted him to try his hand at recording the wealth of racial types which came under his observation. The results were often strikingly beautiful, and his sketches, sometimes, he says, dashed off in a bare ten minutes, reveal a truth of observation and an eye for the essential, a surety of touch and purity of line, a sense of rhythmical composition and a graceful economy of treatment, which give him a claim to serious consideration as an artist.¹

To the general reader Jacquemont will probably appeal most strongly by the wit, verve and pathos of his letters, which have won high praise from critics of his own nationality. Modest as was his estimate of his own literary powers, they are anything but negligible, and it is much to be regretted that he did not live to prepare the “three or four volumes” about his travels which it was his intention to publish. We know that the problems of literary technique exercised his mind. From the snowy wastes of Tibet he wrote to his friend José de Hezeta:

“Perhaps one day I shall take up my pen and try to retrace these strange scenes, of which, so far, I have made only a few sketches, as lifeless as themselves. There is one thing of which I shall be very much afraid if ever I become the author of anything more

¹ Particular attention may be drawn to his coloured drawing of the “Chief Lama of Kanawar” reproduced in black and white facing p. 256, and that of the “Residence of the Rana of Jubbal” facing p. 110.

than a book on geology or botany, and that is of being a bore. But I should be equally afraid of being amusing at the expense of truth. Contrast in detail would lend charm; but how, without lying, could I achieve variety in depicting what is monotonous? Without laying on red, blue, yellow and green where there is nothing but grey and white? How could I show what an event it is to come upon a tree or a house after several days' march without seeing a single plant or man?"

His modesty was, indeed, excessive. We find in his writing the same simplicity and economy of means as in his drawing, but diversified by a great variety of mood, ranging from the low tones, the tender melancholy and melodious grace of the early letters in which he pours out his youthful sorrows to his chosen friends, to the whimsical and exuberant fancy with which he presents his adventures in Tibet and Kashmir for the delectation of those he loved. Prosper Mérimée remarks how rare are the erasures in his letters and journals, written in haste at the end of an exhausting day's march, in conditions of acute discomfort, if no worse. Easy, spontaneous and graceful, the phrases rippled smoothly from his well-worn peacock's quill as it glided rapidly over "ells" of highly glazed Kashmir paper, with a sparkle of wit and a glint of laughter well typified by the gold-dust with which the choicer sheets were powdered over. He has no "purple patches" or attempts at picturesque description. He is above all an acute observer of men, institutions and natural phenomena, and his apt and supple turns of phrase convey his impressions with striking directness and life. "I shall be confident of speaking well," he writes, "provided my thinking has been sound." And his whole life had been a training in accurate thought.

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CORRESPONDENCE

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[THE first letter from Jacquemont to his father after his arrival in Calcutta, in which he described his reception there, went astray, and it was not till August 1830, when he had gone up into Tibet, that he heard of its loss. The first half of the letter which he then wrote recapitulating these early experiences is inserted here out of order so as not to leave a gap in the story. The second half of the letter contains matter much of which is repeated elsewhere, and has therefore been omitted.]

I

(C.F. XXXIV)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Camp at Nako, 26 August 1830.
Long. 78° 40 Greenwich; lat. 32°.
Frontier of Chinese Tartary

My dear father, to snatch time for writing a letter to Europe or India every evening, and thus gradually clear up my correspondence, would occupy my mind and distract it from the horrors of this inferno of ice upon which it has to sleep. But I am taking drastic measures and giving myself a whole day's holiday so as to finish off everybody to-day and think of nobody more between now and my return to Simla. I am writing to you on India paper with a magnificent peacock's feather and pounded indigo; I should prefer a goose quill, some ink from home, whether indelible or not, and some of the paper of those dogs of Christians. But what is to be done! My requirements in this line have been so great in the past that present necessity forces these wretched means of letter-writing upon me.

Yesterday evening I had already daubed from ten to twelve linear feet of this wretched paper with blue for Porphyre, and I

refer you to various paragraphs in that *akhbar*, or gazette, for the answers to several heads in your voluminous letters. Perhaps I am wrong to venture upon such great bales until there are insurance companies prepared to deal with the contents of letters; but considering the distance which separates us I could not write mere notes. And so I commit this one to God's keeping, but let Him look to it!

Since it seems as if He or His favourite deputy Providence has allowed my first letters from Calcutta to get lost, I will recapitulate and tell you that His Most Christian Majesty's old tub, bearing me and my fortune on board of it, dropped anchor before Fort William on May 5, 1829, and after the usual artillery salutes from the aforesaid tub I made my plans for landing on the following day, which were carried out as follows:

My Portuguese man-servant from Pondicherry having summoned a palanquin which was standing on the shore, I dressed myself in black from head to foot and bade adieu to the *Zélee*; then, jumping into the little portable house, I said to the carriers: "*Pirsonn sahebka ghoeur me*";¹ a Hindustani sentence which I had been thinking out all the way from Pondicherry, and which caused them to deposit me without hesitation at the door of M. Pearson, whose magnificent house happened to be the one nearest the river. A sort of Eurybates led me between a double row of servants lining a broad staircase, and ushered me into an immense drawing-room, where I found three women in full dress and a grey-haired man in light cotton clothes, all four of them occupied in being fanned by a complicated system of vanes. My unknown name, proclaimed by the herald, and the simultaneous appearance of my tall black figure, produced the effect of a thunderbolt; but the excessively vacant state of mind into which I had been thrown by all the strange and extraordinary things I had seen during the six minutes that had elapsed since my landing hopelessly paralysed my eloquence in English, so that at the critical moment when the spectre should have spoken there was a pause. I would have given ten louis for a glass of port, which would have put a little wind

¹ *Ed.*—"Pearson sahib ka ghar men" ("To Pearson Sahib's house").

into my sails. . . . I simply could not begin. I had to start with a candid avowal of my incapacity: "I spoke a few words of English formerly, Sir, but I perceive I have forgotten them all, so help me!"

Both the grey-haired man and his three women, especially the two younger ones, behaved in such a way that, a moment afterwards, I was getting on in English as swimmingly as a little fish in a river. These unknown persons were M. Pearson, Madame Pearson, their daughter and her governess or friend Miss Parry. I presented my letters of introduction, in the efficacy of which I did not feel entire confidence, for they were at second or third hand; but no sooner was the seal broken than they led to my acceptance as a guest. When asked whether those were the only ones I had brought to Calcutta, I replied by exhibiting a monstrous packet which was distending my pocket, and which, having been made up in readiness like a judiciously arranged set-piece of fireworks, started, on being opened, with a few preliminary rockets, such as Dr. This, Mr. That, Mr. Somebody the merchant or Captain So-and-so, but gradually led up to the name of a judge, then of the Chief Justice, then of a member of Council, ending, as a grand finale, with the name of Lady William Bentinck and that of the Governor-General, five times repeated. They all drew up their chairs round mine, and I was overwhelmed with questions and kindly offers.

It now struck eleven o'clock, and M. Pearson said: "It is time for me to go to the High Court, and I am extremely sorry that I shall be unable to take you round and introduce you to the persons whom you have to see; but my daughter will explain things to you, and my carriage is at your orders". Whereupon he left me with a hearty hand-shake. Miss Pearson told me that my first visit must be to the palace; and, without telling me, she wrote a note to Lady William Bentinck in my presence and sent it off on the spot. The answer, in accordance with etiquette, was sent direct to me less than a quarter of an hour afterwards by the aide-de-camp in waiting, who informed me that Lady William was expecting me. I got into M. Pearson's carriage with footmen and mace-bearers before

and behind; and having been received at the palace by the aide-de-camp, I was conducted by him to Lady William's private sitting-room. She is a woman of fifty, who must have been quite handsome, but has now no pretensions to youth. My letter for her was from Lord Ashley, one of the members of the Indian Government in London, whom I had only met once, at the famous dinner of the Asiatic Society, so I confessed how slight a claim I had to the introduction of which I was the bearer; but this was hardly gone into at all. Lady William had already discovered that I had met some of her own acquaintances in Paris. We talked for an hour and a half on a host of subjects, till her doctor, who was their guest and appeared at their table, entered and offered her his arm to conduct her to the dining-room, where luncheon was served. Lady William despatched the doctor to her husband to inform him that she had a new acquaintance to present to him; and a few moments later I escorted her into the dining-room. At the same moment Lord William Bentinck entered from the opposite side, with the ministers and two members of Council, which was sitting that day. Lady William performed the presentation in the most amiable fashion, and I sat down on the right of the Governor-General, who read his five letters rapidly during luncheon and, when we rose from table, introduced me to everybody present. I led Lady William back to her sitting-room, and only left her after promising to come and dine that evening at eight o'clock. She had told me all there was to know about the family to which my lucky star had led me.

On returning to the Pearsons, who were a little surprised at my having been gone such a long time, I found the two best rooms in the house in readiness for me; and when I retired to them to rub my hands over such a fortunate beginning, a band of men-servants pursued me there, armed with a variety of fans for cooling me. I had great difficulty in getting rid of them. At five o'clock M. Pearson returned from the Court and paid me a long visit, explaining the material circumstances of his life and his domestic arrangements. I told him my story, the last incident in which, my engagement at Lady William's for that evening, somewhat

embarrassed me; but he seemed pleased with his new acquisition rather than annoyed at losing him for a few moments on the very first day, since I was a sought-after guest. At six o'clock he took me out for a drive with his wife and daughter. This is the daily pastime of the inhabitants of Calcutta for an hour at sunset. They go home to sit down to table by candlelight after changing their clothes again. When I had changed mine M. Pearson's carriage drove me to the palace.

The company had assembled in Lady William's sitting-room. I was again her partner and sat next her at table, this naturally being the place of honour. Everything around us was royal and Asiatic; the dinner, which was entirely French, was exquisite, the wines delicious, served as in France, with moderation, but by great bearded footmen in long white robes and scarlet and gold turbans. Lord William drank my health, a compliment which I immediately returned, and then drank that of my neighbour, who conversed with me on a number of pleasant subjects and was pleased to act as my *cicerone*. To give the appetite time to revive for the second part of dinner, an excellent German orchestra, conducted by an Italian, played several times with rare perfection, performing the loveliest strains of Mozart and Rossini. The distance from which these sounds came, the dim light in the columned halls surrounding us, the lustre of the candelabra with which the table was lit up, the beauty of the fruit with which it was covered in profusion, the perfume of the flowers with which the pyramids of fruit were decorated, and perhaps the champagne too, made me find the music excellent. I felt a sort of intoxication, but not a stupefying one. I talked about art, literature, painting and music in French to Lady William, while at the same time almost making a set speech in English in reply to her husband's questions on the internal politics of France. I made no attempt to hide anything scandalous there may be about my opinions, though I expressed them in simple forms which even a boy of sixteen would not feel bound to use in England. We returned to Lady William's sitting-room for coffee, five or six cups of which I swallowed without knowing I had done so, and there I found myself being compli-

mented by everybody in a way that almost turned my head. As you may well imagine, I did not fail to engage the doctor, who is still young, in conversation about the latest physiological questions, for in general conversation I had had no opportunity of talking about things connected with my profession as a naturalist, and I wished to show myself in this capacity before it was time to leave.

On the following day I tired out my host's pair of horses in making my round of calls, which, however, it was not possible to complete till the following day. On the first day I called upon the people whom I had singled out at the Governor-General's as being the most important, but for whom I had brought no letters of introduction. The rest you know. A fortnight later the Governor-General went to stay in the country, and I was one of the party. Lady William wished me to take my first ride on an elephant in her company, and she seemed quite to enjoy our conversation on top of this walking mountain, so much so that she never had any other companion but me in her rides all the time we were at Barrackpore. During the day I worked in the smart bungalow in which I had been installed near the Governor-General's country house. Sometimes after luncheon, at which all the members of the party met at two o'clock, and at which I fairly often abstained from appearing, for lack of resisting power where *pâté de foie gras* is concerned, I went with Lady William to her sitting-room, where the afternoon passed away pleasantly in conversation about the other side of the world and all sorts of trifles. In the evening after dinner there was sometimes a small party with some music, but it was my habit to monopolize Lord William in the depths of a sofa at the far end of the room. He talked to me about India, I talked to him about the United States; then at half-past ten the signal for departure was given and I withdrew, arm-in-arm with Colonel Hezeta, the friend whom I have already made among so many kind acquaintances. Often before returning to the bungalow which we were sharing, we would wander about the vast avenues of the beautiful park at Barrackpore till midnight. He would tell me about the two revolutions that he had seen in his own country,

the last of which has cast him adrift here with no resource save the old friendship of Lord William. . . .

2

(*Corr. inéd.* I, No. XLI)

*To Colonel Don José de Hezeta, Calcutta*¹

[Calcutta], Monday morning
[July-August] 1829

Since the hour which I spent with you I am left with an impression of sadness which will persist for the whole day. Like you, I have been fated to live for several years among the men of this nation, and they are equitable and kindly, but not sympathetic. I have this advantage over you, that I am in no way dependent on them, and have the prospect of living before long among things rather than people. All the same, I feel how hard it is to be separated from all those capable of inspiring us with a tender affection.

Try, *mon ami*, to overcome the malady which afflicts your soul; compare your own position with that of the people around you. In one respect from which you most suffer, their lot is no better than yours. Though living in close contact owing to their common nationality, they love one another none the more for that.

Resign yourself to the moral atmosphere of the society into which you are temporarily thrown by physical necessity, and do not let it depress you.

In your opinion of the English character and English life, my dear Hezeta, there is a curious discrepancy between the instinct of your heart and your intellectual judgment. You were born to enjoy keenly everything in which they are lacking, and, like them, you can find but cold comfort in the good which is in them. Observe their life, force yourself to enter into their most secret emotions, try to catch in their spirits those gleams of pleasure and

¹ See end of Letter 1, above.

happiness which no doubt still shed a brightness over the memories of your own youth—and you will do so in vain. To feel, to feel so keenly, to be touched, perhaps even to weep!—such things would be beneath a man's virile dignity, and they are carefully on their guard against such a humiliation.

Do not tell me now that you have not a friend in this country (I do not mean a *friend*, but an *ami* or an *amigo*), for I know one very sincere one, whom you won almost on the day you met him. If anything in the spontaneity of his affection, which has since found such ample justification, is able to touch you, may this feeling give you pleasure. I believe, my dear Hezeta, that we said to each other this morning things which friends of thirty years' standing, who happen to be Englishmen, never say, and, in spite of your complaints, I repeat that it is only to a friend that the heart responds like this.

My youthful sorrows, which were extremely violent for a year or two, made me old before my time and brought my age nearer to yours. My twenty-eight years should be no obstacle to your grey hairs.

I shall come and see you on Wednesday at noon or one o'clock, after a visit to old General Pyne, who has called upon me here. We shall have tiffin together, which will be a second visit; then we are going to Serampore, where I owe another call to M. Carey, and from thence we shall proceed either on foot or by boat to M. Ryan's, afterwards returning here, where you will previously have sent your horse in readiness to take you home, if you prefer that more expeditious way to the slowness of a boat going upstream.

3

(C.F. XVI)

To M. Victor de Tracy, Paris

Calcutta, September 1, 1829

My dear friend, I do not know whether my letters have been much more fortunate on the voyage than yours, but I wrote to you from the Isle of Bourbon [Réunion], from Pondicherry and from here, a short time after my arrival; yet I have received only one letter from you as yet since leaving France, written from Paray a few days before I left Brest. It reached me at Bourbon during the long stay I made when we touched there last February. Yet my father, from whom I have just heard after a very long interval, tells me that he has sent on other letters of yours too. I have good cause to fear that they may be at the bottom of the Ganges, with many others besides, as well as a hundred Arab horses wrecked at the mouth of the river on their way here a short time ago by a boat from Madras.

When I informed you of my arrival here I was still suffering from the unpleasant, and almost horrible impression produced upon me by my recent sail up the mouth of the Ganges. At some seasons of the year this river is nothing but a sea of mud, lashed by furious winds and tossed by swift currents. When the force of the tide conspires with their efforts, no anchor can hold against them, no cable but would snap. After running aground on banks several times, unable to steer with any certainty through the narrow channels which are the only navigable parts of this vast expanse of water, we dropped our anchors, and in less than half an hour had lost them all. The hurricane at Bourbon had carried away all our boats, and there we were, helpless against the risks of trying to reach land, should our ship, aground on a bank and battered by a terrible sea, happen to spring a leak. Besides, what

land could we have reached? The island of Sagar [Sangor], the lowest-lying and most hideous in this vast delta, the classic haunt of tigers! This critical state of affairs lasted a whole night, which I spent acting as interpreter between the English pilot and the officers. But as so often happens, *though we barely got away, yet we did get away*, till after all we might just as well never have been there.

I am now reconciled to the sacred river of the Hindus. I have just spent six weeks in a charming spot on its banks, crossing it twice every day to visit the Botanical Garden, opposite which I have been staying with the host and hostess to whom I said good-bye this morning.

The gratifying and kindly welcome which I received on my arrival has not fallen off at all. The distinguished introductions I brought with me have thrown open all the best houses to me. I have chosen those in which I thought myself likely to be most at liberty to give myself up to my studies without interruption. Thanks to the forethought of my friends there is not a single man whom I have seen with pleasure and profit in this land to whom I had not a personal introduction from Europe.

People do not come here to live, to enjoy life; they come—and this is true of all classes of society—in order to earn the wherewithal to enjoy themselves elsewhere. There is not a single man of leisure in Calcutta. The Governor-General is the most heavily laden with work, and after him the Chief Justice, then the Advocate-General, and so forth. Hardly anywhere, except among men of this type, are there any whose taste for study manages to find a few free moments amid the duties of their calling. All but the most able of them soon lose all energy and fall into lax indolence; immediately below the highest society you find the commonest and most vulgar substratum. Yet there are innumerable newspapers, political and literary, though for a very small number of Europeans, it is true; and there are learned societies of every variety, or societies professing to be such—craniological, phrenological, horticultural, literary, medical, Wernerian, and Heaven knows what beside—the members of which in no way yield the

palm to those of similar assemblies in the United States, in either learning or appetite. I could not possibly hesitate between learned men of this type and men of the greatest distinction, though absorbed in studies differing entirely from my own. Thus, as I wrote to you, my first host was the Advocate-General of Bengal, M. Pearson, the only lawyer who has come out from England with a great reputation already made. He is a man of at least your age, full of wit and gaiety, and a liberal, like us, which in English means a radical. I do not know how I inspire such confidence in these people; but they pour out their hearts to me at once quite frankly about things which they are afraid to say to one another after an acquaintanceship of many years. Their minds are full of the most favourable assumptions with regard to the reasonableness, liberalism and independence of a Frenchman's opinions. In the country, where I have just been staying for six weeks with the Chevalier Ryan [Sir Edward Ryan], I was a neighbour—our doors, or rather, our gardens being side by side—of the Chief Justice, a man of the highest ability in the difficult profession of an English judge—the most austere of professions, assuredly—and most austere in appearance too. Well, he was the first to warn me that Lady Ryan was very strict, and that in spite of the Chevalier's good humour and freedom from strictness I might find Sunday very gloomy in their house. He accordingly invited me to take refuge with him on that day, so that we might at least dine and go for a ride together and have a game of chess in the evening, while his wife made music close at hand. You will understand, my dear fellow, that I learnt much during these charming evenings with a man who has administered justice in India for eight years in Madras or Bengal. He wished me to see him conduct a criminal trial in which natives were involved, and I owe him the honour, which is considered a high one here, of having sat on the bench for two days in the High Court.

As you know, the judicature is not abominable in England, as it is in France. Thanks to his profession my present host M. Pearson, who is at the head of it, is certainly one of the people most well-informed about the character of the inhabitants; and

from the facts he tells me and the opinions he expresses, together with the views of Sir Charles Grey, the Chief Justice, I am learning a number of interesting things about the people of this strange land which I could not learn by observation. The *genus homo* is a strange creature in India! A man bent upon death, who has thrown himself before a sacred car with the intention of being crushed beneath its wheels, will get up and run away howling because a European, passing by on horseback, approached him whip in hand: the greatest contempt for death, the greatest indifference, the greatest apparent insensibility to physical pain, combined with the most extreme cowardice; frequent instances of atrocious cruelty combined with the habit of charity: nothing could be more contradictory, bizarre or senseless!

But perhaps the man who does the greatest honour to Europe in Asia is the one who governs it. Lord Bentinck, on the throne of the Great Mogul, thinks and acts like a Quaker of Pennsylvania. You may imagine whether there is any lack of people to exclaim over the dissolution of the empire and the end of the world when they see the temporary master of India riding about in an ordinary coat with no escort, or setting off for the country with his umbrella under his arm. Like you, though long involved in scenes of disorder and blood, like you, my dear fellow, he has kept pure and inviolate that flower of humanity which the habits of military life so often cause to wilt, leaving in its place nothing but good-fellowship. Again, though tried in that most corrupting of professions, diplomacy, he has come out of it with the upright thoughts and simple, sincere language of Franklin, esteeming it no proof of cleverness for a man to appear worse than he is. I stayed with him for a week in the country *en famille*, and shall always remember with pleasure and emotion the long conversations I had with him in the evenings. I felt as if I were talking to a friend like yourself, and when I thought of the vast power wielded by this excellent man, I rejoiced for the cause of humanity.

Lady William is very kind and clever. I had the pleasure of speaking my own language with her, and it was a very keen one. She discovered, I do not know how, that, like all Frenchmen, I

was a very lukewarm Catholic and not a very ardent Christian: and since she is pious, or tries to be, she attempted to convert me. So far as I am concerned, I have been none the better since, and I am really quite afraid she is a little less sure of herself than she was before. This difference of opinion in no way affected the kindness which she was disposed to show me.

Thus I have lacked nothing in the way of amenities; and though I had already had experience of English liberality towards foreigners, I have found far more of it here than I had dared to hope. As you will see, I have even drawn positive and solid advantages from these frivolous successes. I had postponed till my arrival in Calcutta certain studies which were necessary before I could start out on my travels, and for which I reckoned upon finding far greater facilities here than in Paris. I have met with every possible assistance. The walls of my enormous sitting-room are covered with maps of every kind, geographical or geological, and the whole lot of them have followed me in my migrations from town to country and from country to town. Pen in hand, I have read everything published in Calcutta, Madras or Bombay, often being obliged to refer to journals from England in which interesting articles on this country have been published, and thus acquiring an exact knowledge of everything that has been said about it in those connexions which interest me most particularly, and raising many steps higher the point at which I shall start researches on my own account.

During this comprehensive task a learned scholar from Benares came every day when I was in town and spent an hour teaching me Hindustani. During the voyage out I had made a thorough study of William Jones's excellent Persian grammar, and this has been a useful preparation for Hindustani, which, as you know, is no more than a compromise between the language of the conquerors of India and that of the conquered peoples, a contemptible, formless mixture of Persian and Sanskrit. I regret being forced to give up so much time to such a study; but what should I be able to do if I were reduced to speaking to people only through an interpreter? So I do not spare myself. It is a difficult study. You

have certainly tried a little Turkish at Constantinople; you know the detestable system of spelling used by the Mohammedan peoples of Asia, a mere shorthand notation so difficult to read that even the natives themselves can never do so with any fluency. Then again the whole vocabulary is new to us, with the exception of a few Sanskrit words which have come down to us through Latin, Greek and the Germanic speech of the Franks. Add to these difficulties that of grasping by ear nasal sounds hardly differing from a stifled sneeze, and making guttural sounds borrowed at second hand from the Arabs, which require a throat of rusty iron, parched with thirst—and there is your Hindustani. And when by dint of study you have vanquished these difficulties, you have mastered a contemptible patois without any literature, a language of the back-yard and the shop, or, as its name indicates, of the guard-room (*urdu zaban*, language of camps), which will not be the slightest use or pleasure to you outside the land where it is spoken.

The Botanical Garden at Calcutta is a vast, magnificent establishment, in which a very large number of the plants of English India are grown, as well as of certain neighbouring territories, and notably the very curious land of Nepal, whose slopes, from which the waters that trickle from their perpetual snows descend to the Gulfs of Bengal and Cambay in the Indian Ocean, nourish a vegetation in certain respects very similar to that of the Alps and the Caucasus. A rather inferior Danish botanist, who has the reputation here of being the cleverest in the world, is the director of this establishment, and surely the best paid man of science in the world. Being absent on leave for a year or two, he has left his garden in charge of a member of Council, who has kindly installed me there so that I can work as well and quickly as possible. In six weeks I have been able to acquaint myself with the crowded vegetable population of India, assembled there within a small space. A very costly and complete botanical library, adjoining the superb quarters of the absent director, served as my headquarters.

In this beautiful spot I have gradually grown accustomed to

the sun of this land. It is undoubtedly powerful, and it probably draws up noxious vapours from the soil, which is nothing more nor less than imperfectly dried mud, full of the corpses of innumerable insects and worms; but I think the danger one runs by exposing oneself to it is greatly exaggerated. Though I consider myself to have been prudent, yet according to the canons of Indian opinion I ought to be dead. It is true that, as doctors with the greatest experience of this climate admit—and I readily concede that their skill is very great—my constitution is marvelously suited to its chief features. I arrived at the height of the hot weather, which did not cease till the deluge of rain arrived which is still going on, in the intervals of which the temperature rises extremely high. It is the most unhealthy time of year. Those who escape very severe attacks of fever are for the most part languid and exhausted. It is a universal habit for them to poison themselves with mercury, as Louis XIV used to do to himself with cassia and jalap, and, as in duty bound, to the whole court too; but I have not felt the slightest symptoms of fever.

I spend in peaceful sleep the time at night which others, who ought to be accustomed to it, spend in railing against the outrageous heat. Before daybreak in the morning, fresh and well rested, I slip away to my table among my papers; or else, when I am in the country, I escape out of doors well before sunrise, just as the others are beginning to doze off. This good fortune is assuredly due to a certain amount of skill. My secret is sobriety. I point this out to everybody, and am a proof of its success, but they consider the remedy worse than the evil, and everybody about me continues to eat his three meals, religiously abstaining from mixing any water with the heaviest wines of Spain and Portugal. Then, when the evening brings a little coolness, they get on horseback, and young and old gallop aimlessly for an hour like automatons; they return home drenched with perspiration and, as a preparation for sleeping lightly and easily at night, sit down to table, where they remain for two hours, only leaving it to go to bed. There is a great deal of silliness under-

lying this exhibition of "*manliness*"¹ which the English think it incumbent upon themselves to make, and it forms a most ridiculous contrast with the host of cumbrous and sumptuous refinements which are necessary to their comfort. If I had the same needs, or rather exigencies, as they have, I should have to give up my task, for I should certainly never be able to collect the means of executing it. If I had to drag about with me on my travels all that the English do—a bed, a table, a sofa, a cellar—I could scarcely expect to get together my equipment, and besides, I could not possibly do any energetic work amid their way of living, cumbered with so-called material conveniences and enjoyments which I regard as the most inconvenient and tiresome things imaginable. However much I cut down my simple wants—to the point of destitution, these people would say—even then I shall require a suite whose numbers would seem magnificent enough in Europe. But the units of work have not the same value here as in our country, whether in point of intelligence or of strength. An ox weighs barely three hundred pounds; it draws two hundred, and not very far either. Each servant serves you for only a few hours a day, and most abominably too. Like the whole population of which they form a part, they possess that insuperable force which is the attribute of weakness: inertia. One is forced to bow to this obstacle, and, if one is to obtain even the most feeble activity, resign oneself to supporting a whole troop of these wretched creatures.

Uncertain as I was, my dear friend, of the success of the steps which you are taking on my behalf, I have refrained from embarking upon any researches which might have involved me in expenditure exceeding the only resources upon which I can count with certainty, because I have them actually in hand. This prudent restraint has unfortunately been only too well justified, for by the first of April of the present year no decision had yet been arrived at in my favour. I have just written a long letter on the subject to the Jardin des Plantes, besides writing to my

¹ English words thus italicized and placed between quotation marks are those interpolated in his French phrases by Jacquemont himself.

friends there to tell them that they must devise some means of keeping me permanently afloat. If in spite of all my hopes nothing has been done for me by the time you receive this letter, I beg you, old fellow, to look about among your circle of friends and see what means can possibly be devised to promote my success; and I look to your friendship to do whatever you may consider compatible with your position. You might say that it would be a pity to let the precious opportunity be wasted of which I am able to be the instrument; since I am on friendly terms with all the most powerful men in this country, their good-will and support will accompany me and facilitate all my chances of seeing and learning things, thus notably reinforcing my own means of action as soon as these are adequate enough to permit me to set to work.

In any case it would have been right for me to do what I have done so far out of prudence and necessity. This is quite the right beginning for my undertaking if it is to bear fruit: before launching out into this vast country it was necessary for me to acquire some knowledge of men and things. So far, then, the slenderness of my resources has done me no harm, but if it were to persist it would mean failure at the very outset.

Do not imagine, my dear fellow, that these severe annoyances and this anxiety for the future have taken me unawares and placed me in a quandary. No: on leaving Europe to come to these distant lands I foresaw accidents, obstacles and misfortunes. I knew that they are all part of a traveller's life. Yet I embraced it, because I knew that it has an equally large admixture of pleasures, emotions and enjoyments unknown to a sedentary life, and because I flattered myself that by dint of courage and perseverance I should acquire here the means of making myself an honourable place in the world on my return. So though my mind is sometimes pre-occupied, and this is of course trying, it none the less preserves its accustomed liberty, which makes my work easy and light. I feel that I am making good progress; and when one feels this one is not unhappy.

In trying to advance my interests, you can, then, argue that if,

as the result of a most stupid parsimony, the amount of my grant is not raised to fifteen thousand francs, I shall be obliged to abandon my enterprise at the very moment when I ought to be reaping the benefit of it, and that the whole of what it has already cost would be lost before bearing any fruit. To do things by halves is not to do them at all.

I must finish this letter, which is already very long, for time presses and I have not yet written to my family, whose feelings about me are, I know, exactly what they should be—making allowance for what is good and bad in my situation, and trusting to my perseverance. During the last three days, which I have spent in writing to Europe, thus returning in thought to what I hold dear, my feelings have been stirred by this intercourse. I must leave you, my dear and excellent friend, and stifle an emotion which is on the point of making itself felt. But believe me, never have I felt so fully how dear you are to me; I have never enjoyed so keenly the pleasure of being loved. Compared with our friendship how small a thing is the feeling which unites men of this land who call themselves friends! I mean the English—and yet I have no cause to do anything but congratulate myself upon their kindness to me, which is extreme. I sometimes say to those who know me best and whom I esteem most highly that, in banishing from their habitual intercourse all lively expressions of tender feeling, they deprive themselves of one of the greatest pleasures in their possession, and many of them close their hearts to it entirely. I say this, my dear fellow, to those who, after a moment of pensive silence and melancholy self-examination, I know cannot but say yes.

I am often astonished to think how it is that I am liked by men so different from myself, whose thoughts are centred upon things so remote from those visited by my own when I let them rove at will. None of them expect to find anything but lead in the head of a man who goes about breaking stones by the roadside; and with a very few exceptions, the most brilliant of whom they are unable to appreciate, botany to them is merely a puerile and ridiculous study, a “*non-sense*”, well calculated to make those who give

their time to it "*non-sensical*". In short, that revolution which in France has drawn men of science out of their studies and made them mingle with society like everybody else has still to take place in England, where they are as far from it as was once the case in our country. They are unspeakably pleased with me for having read a few tragedies of Shakespeare's, a few poems of Byron's, a few novels of Scott's, for having seen and liked a few pictures by Reynolds and heard of one Mozart, besides one Rossini, who also writes very fine music. It seems strange to them that I should question them about the trade of this country, its internal administration and the machinery of the various public services performed by the local government. However, this desire for knowledge is only a pleasure to them, for it enables every man to talk of the subject he knows best. And since by this means I wage an unpremeditated war upon the dull, commonplace conversations at their long dinners, they consider me gay; for they do not see that all I am doing is to rouse them to interest themselves by giving me information. The truth is, my dear friend, that though I am not sad, I am no gayer than you have ever seen me; but this comparative seriousness is gaiety to them, while to us their gravity is a gloomy and sombre silence. . . .¹

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(*Corr. ind.* I, No. XLV)

*To M. de Melay, Pondicherry*²

Chandernagore, October 1829

DEAR MONSIEUR,

I am profiting by a short stay at Chandernagore, where I have been the guest of the excellent M. Cordier for the last forty-

¹ Passages the omission of which is thus indicated are for the most part concerned either with personal reminiscences and enquiries or with the political situation in France and its reaction on mutual friends.

² M. de Melay, the newly appointed governor of French India, had been Jacquemont's fellow-passenger on the voyage out.

eight hours, and expect to be for another forty-eight, to answer your long and friendly letter of September 27.

I must confess I find it hard to understand the sort of folly and stupidity that characterizes the people with whom you have to deal, or rather who have to deal with you. Here I see a vast empire going on without friction or fuss, except for the clamours of a few "*blackguards*" in print. When two men have a private quarrel, they go out, as they do in every other country, and cut each other's throats behind a wall; the dead man is buried, and there is an end of it. Those whose mutual grudges do not reach such a point as to call for this drastic treatment avoid meeting each other, and when they chance to meet beneath the same roof, refrain from exchanging a word. As for disputes between public officials arising out of their professional duties, these are very rare. It is true, of course, that each official has such a wide sphere of operations that it is difficult for him to be jostled by his neighbours. Nevertheless, the case of disobedience to a chief on the part of an inferior does occasionally occur. When it does, the Government secretary to whose department the matter belongs (for their functions correspond pretty well to our ministers' administrative functions) holds a little enquiry and proposes to the Governor-General in Council that he should order whichever of them is in the wrong to apologize ("*apologiser*") to the one who is in the right; and when the matter has been patched up in this way, the two men are separated by keeping each of them in a similar post. Refusal of Government mediation is immediately followed by dismissal from the service. . . .

If the English had brought out governors in the same proportion to the governed as we have done in India and are doing everywhere else, Lord William Bentinck would possibly be having as much trouble as you are. The very people who ought to be helping you are the ones who are proving an embarrassment. I imagine that if it were not for your army of officials, your seventy thousand Hindus would not give you the slightest trouble. But our fellow-countrymen are as a rule absurd as administrators. It is one of the points in which our nation, great, reasonable and

excellent though it is in other respects, is inferior. . . .

If you make your aide-de-camp Arnoux read you the Calcutta newspapers at all regularly, you will be quite familiar with the sort of opposition which the Government here tolerates. My host the Advocate-General, who has the character of an ultra-liberal in England, but who sees no resemblance, whether actual or legal, between the underlying principle of the English Government and that of the Company in India, is none the less in favour of suppressing papers which go too far and taking legal proceedings against their proprietors. He personally disapproves of many acts of the administration; but he would like to deport to England those who print in their papers in Calcutta every morning that the government of the Company is abominable and express the hope that Parliament will refuse to renew its charter. As it is by special permission and favour of the Company that these persons reside within its territories it is no infringement of any of their rights to force them to leave, but merely the withdrawal of a favour.

For the purpose of arriving at some reasonable balance between its receipts and expenditure, and making a good show before Parliament when the great question of the Company's charter comes up before it shortly for debate, the Court of Directors has ordered the Governor-General to make a drastic and unpopular reduction in everybody's pay. This is so as to be able to say to Parliament: "You see how economical we are! Who could govern more cheaply than we do? Who could offer the Company's creditors such security as we are now doing by our excess of revenue over expenditure?"

In the opinion of those best able to see far ahead, the charter will be renewed, but possibly with the dreadful modification that the Company will be deprived of its monopoly of trade with China; and since that is the most important source of its profits, it would probably refuse to keep the government of India on these terms, and it would pass into the hands of the King. Comparing the opinions I have heard expressed on the subject, I am forced to the conclusion that the country will be no better

governed for that, and the patronage enjoyed by the English ministers will be enormously increased. From this point of view men of liberal opinions desire the renewal of the charter. At present it corrupts nobody save a few of the Directors, who are accused of selling the posts to which they have the right to nominate annually. This sort of private corruption has no influence upon politics, and Parliament incurs no odium from it; whereas the ministers, with two or three hundred commissions more to distribute every year, will acquire even greater power over the Honourables and Right Honourables who have nephews to provide for.

In spite of the "half-*batta*" (half-pay), these commissions are a passport to fortune. I have seen every form of English life in this country at close quarters, and gone into all its details. I am as well acquainted with the household of the Governor-General as with that of a young infantry subaltern. The latter is most curious. As one who nearly became a doctor, I have read many definitions of life, not counting that of Werther-Potier of the *Variétés*; yet I had never before discovered what life really means. It means riding to the drill-ground in the morning (and drill has to be over by seven o'clock during eight months of the year), having a house to oneself with five or six large rooms, verandahs, etc., a subscription to the morning newspapers and the novels of the season, a simple but elegant luncheon, an abundant dinner, rich in silver and glass, two or three bottles of wine or beer and a cabriolet for the evening drive. In order to live it is also necessary to be fanned all day, to change one's clothes four times, and a few other comforts of the sort, to drink nothing which has not been cooled with saltpetre, to smoke nothing but a *narghileh*, which makes it necessary to keep servants for the purpose, etc., etc. Unless he has all this, a young fellow fresh from school, arriving here with a sub-lieutenant's commission, considers himself most unfortunate, complains, and is firmly convinced that he is being cheated. He thinks it his right to have all these things. In spite of the half-*batta*, he can still provide himself with them without running into debt if he has any idea of orderly management. But

orderly management is a mean and ignoble thing; it is the exact opposite of grandeur, which is the true attribute of a gentleman, etc., etc., etc.)

This is how these young men talk; and it is the genuine opinion of the Englishmen of all ages whom I have seen, with three or four exceptions. They consider that leaving their country to come here is an enormous sacrifice, as compensation for which they have the right to all sorts of advantages. A young cadet who has only just landed, who does not know a word of Hindustani, has never had a service musket in his hands, and would not know how to give four men orders to march past, is sincerely convinced of the validity of his right to live like a rich man in India.

I am bewildered at this baseless pride, this unjustifiable ambition. Sometimes these seem to me the height of stupidity and insolence; at other times I see in them a principle of success and progress. An Englishman would feel unhappy in numbers of situations in which our modest tastes would find satisfaction; so in order to rise to a better one, he works and takes trouble, whereas we remain inactive, being satisfied with the point we have reached. I do not think their system conducive to individual happiness; but it is very conducive to the power and strength of the nation.

There are no subaltern posts for them in the government of India. They cannot suffer a man of their nationality to appear before the natives except on a footing of superiority and grandeur. Their sepoys present arms to all Europeans except the common herd in Calcutta. Thus they combine admiration with the fear which they inspire and that respect upon the outward expression of which, at least, they insist.

I believe this system to be a very wise one for the quiet preservation of what they have conquered. It lends them the greatest moral force. The natives are thoroughly convinced of the baseness of their own nature; the people in this part of India which has been longest in English possession, accustomed from time immemorial to the strictest obedience, feels neither hatred

nor attachment for them; it sows and ploughs and, provided only it is left enough to keep it from dying, is content.]

The collector (who is at the same time the administrator of a vast province) has only one assistant under him. All their agents are natives. Those at the top of the ladder are men esteemed for their fortune, which is a guarantee in the eyes of the European official; and down to the native bailiff, there is a well-graduated system of responsibility which protects that of the collector. His assistant does the routine work with two or three native chief tax-collectors, and the titular head, who is in correspondence with the Government secretaries, appears only in the capacity of judge to the people whom he really governs. But as such he is obviously the protector of the lower classes, and is therefore popular.

I have little doubt, however, that our *modus operandi* spares the common run of the natives many arbitrary vexations committed by Indian agents under the English system. The English *sahibs* are so powerful that any reputation for good-nature on their part provides a native with the right to pillage, and those who are pillaged have no right to complain too loudly. Not long ago a resident was sent to Chittagong, on the other side of the Bay of Bengal. He was only a captain, and had an assistant who was, I believe, a civilian. On reaching the place where he was to be resident he had to call upon the titular prince, who had been deprived of his authority, and on the following day the rajah had to return his call with his little court. The *vakil*, or honorary minister to this so-called prince, whose place it was to shine as a lesser star in this exchange of prescribed courtesies, went to see the resident's assistant, who arranged the procedure, and offered him a *lakh* of rupees if he would insert the clause that the resident was to clap him on the shoulder. This mark of familiar friendship, which is one of the Indian forms of salutation, was meant to raise the *vakil* to such heights in the eyes of the public at Chittagong, and give such an exalted idea of his influence with the resident, that the rogue would very soon have got his *lakh* back again by selling his supposed influence retail. There are many *babus* in Calcutta who are able to keep their

carriage by following this principle. They make a living out of the credulity of rich natives. At times there are very large pecuniary interests at issue before the High Court or the administration. It is supposed that these people then approach a judge or Government secretary for the purpose of tipping the balance in favour of the side which pays them. On a microscopic scale, so your Advocate-General M. Moiroud told me, the same thing happens at Pondicherry. Your servants sell the right to approach you to a few fools, and possibly the lieutenant of police's great *dobachi* takes money under pretence that he is doing it on his master's behalf. What proof can there be of this, and how is it to be prevented?

The Company is obliged by Act of Parliament to keep up a force of twenty-five thousand European troops. Since these are very costly, they are never at full strength. At the present moment there are hardly more than fifteen thousand. The mortality among them is very high. Drunkenness, which in England stupefies men, kills them here. There is no intercourse between the English soldiers and the sepoys. Both occupy Fort William, yet, though crowded into a small space, they never quarrel. It is only between the officers that a few words or pistol-shots are exchanged, for those in the King's army affect to regard themselves as very much above those of the Company. Yet the latter receive their commissions from the King like the others; corresponding ranks enjoy the same precedence according to seniority; but once past the Cape they no longer count at all. However, it is not *qua* soldiers that the officers in the King's army assume this insulting superiority over those of the Company, but *qua* gentlemen; and this pretension is well founded. Not that the officers of the Company do not belong to honourable families; but there is no *esprit de corps* in the Company's army. Each officer lives alone in his own house. When on campaign he drags his servants, bed and kitchen about with him. There is no common mess, no social intercourse among officers of the same corps. It is possible for them never to see one another except under arms. Whether married or single, they all live alone. Their breeding wears off,

their natural propensities appear beneath it, and these unfortunate young men, who were honourable men before, but whose honour and delicacy were due only to the force of example, are gradually led into gross debauchery or swindling. It is seldom that the gazette does not contain an account of some court-martial, and it is not the poor devils of common soldiers who are tried at these, but officers, for having *lost their character as an officer and a gentleman.*)

The King's regiments do not suffer from this scandal. In them all officers without exception are obliged to eat together, from the colonel down to the sub-lieutenant. If an officer were to act dishonourably in the morning, he would be forced by a unanimous affront from his fellow-officers and superiors, in the shape of a refusal to drink with him at dinner in the evening, to make himself scarce before he went so far as to provide employment for a court-martial. A man is jointly responsible for the honour of those who share his mess. Hence the *esprit de corps* in the King's regiments is admirable. It will come among the officers in the Company's troops so soon as they are no longer rich enough for each to have a house to himself.

You have seen the repellent coldness of English officers towards their European soldiers. Here, with the ordinary natives, it is worse still. I try in vain to find what bond it is that attaches their men to them. Yet discipline is admirable.

In every company (as with you in Pondicherry) there are two or three native officers who, when they are too good, are discharged from the service with full pay on retirement, on the pretext of rewarding them. They are capable enough to regulate and supervise all the automatic details of the service, but must go no further. So soon as the sepoys become attached to them, so soon as they encroach upon the admiration and respect which must be the exclusive property of European officers, they are immediately discharged. There is even a general regulation fixing the period of active service for a *subedar* (native officer), and a pretty short one it is too. The *subedars* do not speak English. They despatch their small business in Hindustani every morning with the

European officer. The latter cannot, as a general rule, write or speak any native language; but by the end of two or three years he can stammer what is absolutely necessary.

Any young officer who, instead of sleeping, smoking and drinking *grog* all day, is ready to work seriously, learn Hindustani and Persian, and read some forty or sixty volumes on Indian matters which have been printed during the last sixty years, is sure to rise above the crowd and find lucrative employment in important work.

In the Company's army rank goes by seniority only; and after eighteen years' service, whether there is a vacancy or not, every officer has a right to a captain's commission. What security for the many!

But posts are not allotted according to rank. When General Malcolm, the present Governor of Bombay, went on his first mission to Persia in 1801, he was a mere captain. Office is given according to the ability to fill it. Thus the new resident at Lucknow, the man who pulls the wires for the King of Oudh [Aoude], is only a major. At Katmandu [Catmandou] in Nepal, where he also has important functions to fulfil, he is a captain. Is not the service of the Company the finest of all military services? What security for mediocrity! And what superb chances for talent, or even for mere merit!

That business at Rangoon last month did not create any sensation here. The English officer who abandoned his post will no doubt be tried and shot if he is caught. A dozen Burmese will be hanged without any more ado, and that will be an end of it. As for the recent hostile demonstrations by Ranjit Singh on the north-west frontier, they had no existence except in those newspapers whose editors my host the Advocate-General would like to deport to England. This Ranjit Singh is a man of the type of Mehemet-Ali of Egypt. He has managed to make himself undisputed king of the whole Punjab or Pentapotamid, between the Sutlej and Indus. He has a pretty strong army, trained more or less on European lines by a few of those adventurers who left France at the second Restoration. Thanks to this he is master in his own

house and in those of a few poor devils of neighbouring rajahs as well, whose territories he has invaded, but he can be nothing of the sort in that of the English. It is true that at the time of the Burmese war they had to keep an eye on him; but in times of peace *he is the best of neighbours. Before his day the peoples he governs* were always making incursions into English territory. Their petty princes, who, owing to their fear of punishment, were sometimes sincere allies of the English, were often unable to restrain their men; now the frontier is occupied by regular troops and thoroughly respected. Thus from the military point of view the position of the empire is most satisfactory.

I had supposed the trade between India and England to be far more considerable than it is; and it is shrinking every year. The export of cotton is rather insignificant compared with that from the United States, equatorial America and Egypt. Sugar, which I thought cost two sous a pound, costs six or seven—the same price as at Havana, and it is of inferior quality, besides being five thousand leagues away from the European markets instead of fourteen hundred. Labour is in general far more economical than we in Europe suppose. The division of work is organized here in view of the quantity of labour, instead of for its profit, as with us. The manufacture of cotton stuffs is decreasing every year; English stuffs are crushing out the native ones by their low price. However, it takes two to carry on trade, and there is a shortage of commodities on the Indian side to exchange in return. Saltpetre, exported to Europe and China, opium, almost all of which goes to the latter country, and indigo are all that manufacture offers to the speculator in India.

According to our national custom, the French ships coming to Calcutta for the last few years have made enormous losses; yet the shipowners do not tire of this ruinous game. They seem to take a pleasure in providing the people of this country with claret at a lower price than they pay for it themselves in France. Is this not so in most parts of the globe visited by our sea-borne trade? Is the national capital of France increasing as a result of this sort of industry, or is it not decreasing every year? Are there more

fortunes than there are bankruptcies at Le Havre, Nantes and Bordeaux? I really do not think so.

You are aware that hitherto the English might not own land in India. A new Act of Parliament has recently relieved them of this disability; in a short time they will have the power to acquire land. The propriety of this measure is contested by many. The English here have before their eyes the painful spectacle afforded by the degenerate descendants of previous conquerors of India. There is a fairly large Portuguese population in Calcutta. Few of them, it is true, can boast a purely European origin; there are some, but they are all black, blacker than the natives, and they linger on in low debauchery and poverty, despised even by the natives. Well, I have seen a number of people who are convinced that after three or four generations in India, or at least in this part of India, their proud and stalwart race would become equally degraded. Their pride is hurt by the thought that one day, in a century or two's time, Englishmen, men of English race, speaking the language and professing the religion of England, should be burnt black by the climate, enfeebled, emasculated and reduced to inferior employments among the Indians; and bad conduct and drunkenness would certainly bring a large number to this pass if many of them were to come and settle here without having their means of livelihood guaranteed by government employment. The "*Chief Justice*", whose talents lend him great weight in the Government even outside the department of which he is head, is of opinion that there is only one way of settling in this country at once suited to the national dignity and advantageous to individuals. The following is his plan: the Company has a large debt, and the annual interest is paid out of its revenues, the greater part of which come from the leasing of land, almost all of which is its property. These lands should be sold in large lots, and considerable nobiliary privileges would be attached to their possession. A number of rich country gentlemen would no doubt be found who, bored at not being even baronets in England and at paying a million francs to become obscure members of Parliament from time to time, would purchase this sort of principality,

which should not be divisible between their children.

I have it from the same Chevalier Grey (the Chief Justice)—and in such a way that I can tell you without indiscretion—that a short time ago very active steps were taken by the English Government, which approached ours with the object of obtaining the cession of our possessions in this land in return for a money payment. The Company, acting through the Government of the King of England, offered us more than a million pounds sterling—I believe two million (that is, fifty million francs down)—and would have considered itself obliged to us even at that. But it met with extreme unwillingness on our part. . . . However this may be, you may be sure that the English Government will return to the charge again. The Government of India, I do not know why, attaches great importance to not leaving us anywhere in this country. At the same time negotiations are going on with the court of Copenhagen for the cession of Serampore and Tranquebar. The fact is that Tranquebar, Pondicherry, Mahé, Karikal [Carical], Yanam [Yanaon] and Goa are quite inoffensive to the administration of this country; but by its extreme proximity to Calcutta Serampore embarrasses the course of justice. It is the haunt of all the big fraudulent bankrupts from the capital of the empire. A few unfortunate and worthy men find a refuge there, to the satisfaction of all honest people; but for one man of that sort whom one is glad to see escape the clutches of the law there are a thousand rogues thoroughly fit for the pillory, who mock the misery of those they have ruined by their constant round of pleasures. If the Company were to content itself with acquiring Serampore from the Danes while leaving us at Chandernagore, that place, which already harbours a few lesser rogues, would become what Serampore is now. The English Government had morality enough not to ask for reciprocal rights of extradition instead of total cession. I am delighted for the honour of our own Government, which is not very robust, and might possibly have given way.

I do not quite see what satisfaction our pride or vanity can find in the possession of places incapable of defence, which we occupy

at present only by the grace of God and, still more, of the English. But perhaps some of the very influential persons who took part in these abortive negotiations have no more knowledge of geography than Lord Castlereagh.

... All the stupid elements of the English public in India despise us cordially for our poverty. I have had the good fortune to have dealings with none but the most well-bred fraction of the rich, and I have not once suffered in my vanity from my inability to imitate them. I should not have obtained another pleasure or received a courtesy the more if I had had a carriage, at least, instead of a very occasional cabriolet. I have sufficient respect for the intelligence of the people I meet to tell them that their excessive opulence is a monstrous abuse and a mistake. I do not hide my opinion that the English system of life is nothing but a series of mistakes, all fatal to happiness; they hang themselves or get drunk out of boredom, whereas we drown ourselves out of passion. They are always talking about "*home*", but this home of which they are so fond consists of springy chairs, sofas, the material things in their houses; our "*home*", of which we do not speak, is the heart. I tell them that the poor in our country have more pleasures and pleasanter and nobler ones than the rich have in theirs. If I were Governor of Chandernagore I should not hide from them. I should say that I considered myself very well paid for such light duties, and that they are extravagantly paid for posts which for the most part call for no talent. Instead of restricting my little society to my few poor devils of fellow-countrymen, even more seedy than myself and totally lacking in distinction, I should wish to have to my house in the evenings two or three really distinguished men from among the bored rich people of the neighbourhood. I would make them amuse one another, giving them nothing but glasses of water to drink, and I am sure they would think none the worse of me for it. This is what the governor of the tiny town of Serampore does, though he does it a little timidly. He is monstrously badly paid, but extremely well educated, speaking French, English, German, anything you please. His young wife is equally charming and well-bred; they

both have the most "*gentlemanlike*" air imaginable. Lord and Lady Bentinck shower polite attentions upon them and have them to their house as much as they can. I have often seen them there at dinner, and, like me, they were enjoying without any dismal reflections the pleasure of having a very good dinner in excellent company, with a fine concert in the intervals of appetite. When a post is so small it is for the man who occupies it to make it respected by his character and, if he can, his intelligence.

What vexes me is not our poverty, but our blatant vulgarity at times. Yesterday evening, for instance, after dinner a collection of our fellow-countrymen came to the good M. Cordier's house, who were no doubt the most worthy and estimable people in the world; but I can only say that I should have been very much mortified if some English officer who had spent a year in Paris had arrived at that moment to pay his respects to our Governor in passing. He would not have carried away a very exalted idea of the flower of those governed.

This place is charming. These little houses, low, but well surrounded by verandahs supported on columns; the gardens between the houses, the narrow, grass-grown streets, seem to me more picturesque than Calcutta. If I could draw, I should want to stop at every step to record some charming detail. Calcutta is no longer a city of palaces in my eyes, but a city of big houses. . . .

5

(C.F. XIX)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Calcutta, Sunday, November 8, 1829

MY DEAR PORPHYRE,

I spent the rainy season fifteen miles to the north of Calcutta at M. Pearson's country place, occupied chiefly in studying Hindustani, which I can now speak, understand and write well

enough. I took advantage of a few days when there was no rain to visit the microscopic Governor of Chandernagore, with whom I had come round on the *Zélée* from Pondicherry, where he had been temporarily in charge until the arrival of M. de Melay. He is a most kindly man and could not have been nicer to me.

I have accustomed myself to going on foot, getting wet through, and walking in the sun without dying on the spot, taking with me my *munshi*, or teacher, from whom I could learn more in the presence of things and people than sitting at a writing-table. Hindustani, as you know, is nothing but a rough-and-ready mixture of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. In those parts of India where Sanskrit was formerly the vulgar tongue, it still predominates in the Hindustani now spoken; in those geographically nearer to Arabia and Persia, on the other hand, Hindustani is scarcely more than a much corrupted Persian. I have opted for this sort of corruption, so that my jargon may be intelligible both to the people of India and, in case of need, to those of Persia. The news which I have received by instalments since my arrival in Bengal—which, from the pecuniary point of view, has been purely negative—has caused me much thought during my studious retirement at Titagarh [Tittaghur]. I went to the expense of various journeys in imagination, with none of the pomps of the Orient, as you may well imagine; but in reality I always had to stay at home.

However, the rains were growing less persistent, the fine season, the winter, was approaching; and I had to think how to profit by it, and resolve upon some course of action. I have decided upon the only plan that is feasible with the resources at my disposal, and here it is:—

In a few days' time I am starting for Benares. . . .

Now take the map and follow me.

Riding on a white horse (I am predestined to ride on white horses!), with my pistols in good order in the holsters, I shall head the procession, closely followed by two poor devils who will cost me together twenty-four or thirty francs a month, and one of whom, called a *syce*, is, strictly speaking, the groom,

while the other, the *ghassiara*, or grass-cutter, is in charge of my old screw's table. Each of them will carry one of my guns, loaded with ball or shot as the case may be. When I gallop they will run behind me, for such is the custom.

Grouped in various ways round a rough cart made of bamboo and drawn by two oxen, on which my baggage will slowly proceed, will walk the grand master of my close-stool or *sirdar* bearer [*béerah*], a *khidmatgar* [*khimutgar*] or table-servant and (by an ingenious accumulation of offices) at the same time cook, a *masalchi* [*moussaltchi*] or plate-washer (note that I possess two plates), and a *bhishni* [*bisti*] or water-carrier.

Besides the ox-driver in attendance on the cart, there is another who will drive a draught-ox laden with the smallest tent in India as far as Benares.

I shall travel six, seven or eight leagues a day, living on rice cooked in the native fashion, fowls and milk, and drinking water mixed with French brandy, so long as I have any left; never any bread. I shall sleep in my tent on a mat or a light frame with stuff stretched over it.

In thirty-five or forty days' time I shall reach Benares, two hundred leagues from here, passing through Burdwan, Raghunathpur [Rogonautoor] and Sasaram [Sasseram].

At Benares I shall give myself and my servants a rest at the house of some judge or collector, and hire camels before proceeding along the right bank of the Jamna to Delhi, going a little out of my way to see an interesting region, the Bundelkhand [Bundelkund] and passing through Mirzapur [Mirzapoor], Kalinga [Kalinger] and Agra. The camels are splendid, I am told: they can be hired for nine rupees (twenty-three francs) a month, seven rupees if one takes more than three. One does not have to trouble about feeding either them or the men who drive them. The same is true, moreover, for servants of all sorts: they are paid absolutely nothing beyond their wages, and fend for themselves as best they can. A camel carries three or four hundred pounds. By that time I shall have a stronger beast to carry my tent; so I shall have a better one, and the whole thing will cost

less than the oxen and cart from here to Benares. But on this first part of my route there are no camels; besides which there are houses built and maintained by the Government, which provides the roof and four walls within which I shall often sleep with my absurd little tent for a mattress. I shall be more comfortable on it than inside it.

From Delhi to the foot of the mountains, passing through part of the Sikh territory, I shall pursue my journey with camels; after that in the hills with mules and oxen, and finally, during the last days, with men's backs.

The road along which I shall travel is very safe and does not pass through any particularly unhealthy place. Tigers and bears, whose existence, with the best of intentions, I cannot entirely deny, are not very common, and rarely speak to people who do not speak to them. If they were to take the initiative I have at any rate five shots ready to reply with, and I am sure that an encounter with them would not be dangerous, for I am firmly resolved to fire only at the closest range.

If, moreover, owing to unforeseen circumstances I were to desire some protection beyond that of my own resolution, I should have an escort. Here is the passport I have received to-day for this purpose. Father will translate it into French:

"M. Victor Jacquemont, a native of France, engaged in scientific pursuits, being about to travel in Hindoostan, with the permission of the Honourable Court of Directors, and of the supreme Government of India, it is the desire of the Governor-General in Council that every necessary assistance and protection shall be afforded to him by the officers and authorities of the British nation, and further that he shall receive from them any attentions that they may have it in their power to offer."

This is better than the usual "We request you to allow Mr. X to pass and circulate freely, etc., etc."

But in addition to this general recommendation to those for whom I have no personal introduction, Lady William Bentinck is having a goodly number of the latter kind prepared for me, and I shall have some from her in person. My packet of letters from

London, of which I did not exhaust half at Calcutta, was a trifle in comparison with the one I shall take away from here. Not till to-morrow shall I arrange with my banker how I am to draw on him on my way by means of drafts; but this will be settled to my satisfaction. Not till to-morrow shall I start drawing on my grant for 1829 to pay for my old screw. I have got nearly to the end of the year without touching it.

Do thank Colonel Lafosse again for enabling me to make the acquaintance of his friend. Colonel Fagan and I are like a pair of thwarted lovers; a curious series of small accidents has interfered with some twenty projected meetings. We only saw each other a few times, but we met like people who know that they have no time to lose and will soon be separated. A widower, overwhelmed with business (he is Chief of Staff to the army) and a sick man, he lives alone, goes nowhere and sees nobody. Yet at whatever time of day I put in an appearance I am made much of; we talk about the affairs of Europe and he tells me about those of this land. He may be an Irishman by birth and an Englishman by nationality, but I call him a Frenchman like myself, and more French than many born in Paris.

I have the pleasing assurance that the long period for which I availed myself of M. Pearson's hospitality was no indiscretion. He made much of me in every way. When some French ships arrived recently, he sent people running about for two days to find a Périgord *pâté*; and this morning at luncheon he made me violate my Asiatic sobriety by surprising me with one of truffled quails, which will last us the shortest possible time, for it is delicious. Though I have become as intimate with him as one can do with English people, I have never ceased to meet with the same gratifying attentions at his house as those with which he welcomed me the first day. Now I am the companion of his life, I am strictly speaking his only society, as he is my only company when I stay to dinner at his house. As regards our personal crotchets, political theories and literary tastes, we agree marvelously well, and he seems to take a great pleasure in our hour's conversation after dinner, for he is a man of wide knowledge.

A small fraction of his knowledge and talent—the legal part—brings him in 400,000 francs a year, of which he spends 160,000 in the grand style. His position as Advocate-General is worth only 100,000 of this sum.

I could not have had a better billet here in any respect whatever. What would have become of me, *mon Dieu*, if I had not had those three weeks in London? But I remember that I spared no exertion there.

Adieu for to-day, old fellow, for I am not sparing myself exertion now either, but am leaving you to try a new horse which has just been offered me, a young Persian one, saddled and bridled, for 250 rupees (650 francs), though when I rode out this morning on and with the above-mentioned white nag I had a very heavy fall, which has left my chest all bruised. Adieu.

Monday, the 8th

I am making you a spectator of my departure, for I am writing amid the preparations for it. I have broken with the white horse and have a grudge against it for the way it hurt me, so I shall set out on my new acquaintance of yesterday evening, which has been approved this morning by a good judge of horses. It is a little chestnut, which is entire, and gives me this much security for carrying me into the northern provinces, that it has already come from there once, having been born there. Its paces are good and it gallops well when called upon to do so. I think I have made a good bargain. Further, with the horse I have got the groom, also from the northern provinces, who speaks excellent Hindustani, knows the beast's moral and physical constitution, and has been looking after it for a year, a strong, vigorous fellow, who is delighted at returning to his own part of the country with me. I am forming my little escort to my own liking, of men accustomed to the service of officers and harsh treatment, and am already so much affected by the contagion of example that I shall not allow the slightest relaxation of discipline. One becomes degraded and brutalized by living among such abject creatures. I now understand and excuse Frédéric's harshness—I was about to say

violence, and the great facility with which he kicks God's image in the seat. This idea now occurs to me just as readily as it does to him.

Your recollections of another time and place arrived just in time to drive away any ideas I may have had of my own sufferings on the long march I am about to undertake. I am animated by the feelings best suited to my position. I regard myself precisely as a soldier on campaign, now taking good things as I find them and enjoying them keenly by comparison with the anticipated contrast; and now sleeping gaily on a mat in cold weather or in hot, sometimes in the rain, sometimes, too, of necessity, without any dinner, though I have two servants for my cooking alone. After all, my caravan, the most wretched of all that have ever trailed through India, will be magnificent by comparison with your predicament on the way back from Minsk. I remember your letters at that time, dear Porphyre, as though they had been read to me yesterday. I formed my ideas of war and military life as a result of your individual case (which was that of a million Frenchmen at that time) and am no less flabbergasted than you are at the complaints you have received from some of our warriors in Greece.

During my bad days I shall remember those you spent then, frozen and starving, when you were barely twenty, and shall never consider myself unfortunate. The English have habits of opulence and innumerable artificial needs which would necessarily make them feel so in the various situations in which I shall find myself. I do not say this out of envy: no, I despise this ignoble dependence upon material things from the bottom of my heart. For my own part, on the other hand, I am sure I shall sometimes find a charm in the somewhat old-world and Biblical simplicity of my caravan.

It goes without saying that in states under the domination or protection of England, or simply in alliance with her, I continue to wear European clothes, which are enough to turn any fairly white man into a *sahib*, that is, a gentleman.

All the same, in the northern provinces it is a good thing to

add a shawl and body-belt to the European costume in winter. Fine fellows naturally seize this opportunity of making the rupees fly by wrapping themselves in Kashmir shawls. I shall consider myself quite magnificent enough with a good warm piece of thick silk stuff over a great nankin dressing-gown; all this on the above-mentioned red or bay horse, topped by a pale face with goggles and a great straw hat covered with black taffeta, ought to make a good subject for a picture by Mérimée.

My banker, M. Delessert's foreign agent, is the most civil fellow in the world, and gave me an excellent lecture upon financial questions as they affect me. I shall be able to draw on him almost everywhere along my route. The possibility of future grants has been provided for. I shall keep him informed of my movements, and he will at once notify me of any increased credits which he may be able to allow me.

I have said nothing about my health, so here is my bulletin: I have never felt the slightest symptom of fever. I have slept as I do at home in winter, though the extreme heat was preventing everybody round me from sleeping. I have not much appetite, and eat but little. I am very much subject to colds in the head, which I shall probably prevent by wearing a turban, but here that is impossible; later on we shall see. When I am in my own hut or tent, and do not have to respect the convenience of a host, then perhaps I may come to it. Father will note that the colds affect the nasal fosses and frontal sinuses, but never go lower than this. My old tendency to sore throats seems to have entirely disappeared.

Good-bye, old fellow; I leave you to go and dine *tête-à-tête* with my amiable invalid Colonel Fagan.

Milord William has just lent me the French papers which he has received from Bordeaux up to July 17; and I have read them rapidly and with interest. This will be my last contact with my native land. But adieu. Wine and brandy have been made on the borders of Tibet, and I shall eat grapes in the coming autumn; in the meantime I shall have nothing but bananas and bad peaches.

Barrackpore, Saturday, November 21

To a shipowner like you, dear Porphyre, I may say with entire propriety that yesterday I at last weighed anchor. You know how many delays and unforeseen postponements there are in fitting out a vessel and what a combination of things is necessary before it can start. But towards three o'clock yesterday, seeing my carts loaded in the street and my little army standing by fairly complete, I gave orders to start. As a sailor you will object that it was a Friday. But what was to be done? If I had waited, some of my men would have lost their fathers or brothers during the night and would have been obliged to wait till to-day in order to bury them or roast them, according to the custom of the Hindus. In short, I should still have been detained here, and for God alone knows how long. Towards nightfall I mounted my horse, rejoined my troop outside the city, and made them push on for five *kos* [*cosses*].¹ I have ten men with me, and I think there are a few good ones among them. Moreover, my cook's father is following me, not in a professional capacity, but with the object of returning to his home. The fellow will end by costing me four rupees a month, for I cannot dispense with a *chokidar* [*tchokedar*] or night watchman, and shall be forced to confer this dignity upon him, together with a pike like those of the old National Guard, or else a sabre and shield, whichever is more economical. The pike is a matter of half a rupee, but I am afraid the latter sort of equipment exceeds the figure one. My men cost me about fifty rupees a month, and the two carts eight rupees from here to Benares.

Engineers being inclined by nature to help themselves to Government property ("perruquiers", or "scroungers"), I believe that one of them, who is in charge of the stores at the arsenal here, has made me a present of a tent at the expense of the Honourable Company, on the pretext that it was not new, having been put up for a moment in order to show it off. For a hundred and ten rupees (the price of "Class 2: old tents capable of being repaired") he had a nice little mountain tent delivered to me, which I find,

¹ *Ed.*—The *kor* is equivalent to two miles.

on examining it conscientiously, to be perfectly new.

On saying good-bye to me yesterday as I mounted my horse, M. Pearson said that he regarded me as a member of his family, and that if any unforeseen event brought me back to Calcutta I must have no other house there than his.

I am full of strength and resignation, glad to find myself on the road and glad to owe this to my own prudence. Adieu, old man, adieu. I love you with all my heart.

6

(*Corr. inéd.* I, No. LI)

To Colonel Don José de Hezeta, Calcutta

Titagarh, November 17, 1829

Good God, my dear fellow, what a horrible jargon this Hindustani is which I have been learning for the last month! All that time I have not heard a word from you. I have been to Barrackpore several times, but I found nobody there but idiots, except during the last week, when the Chevalier Grey with his subtle wit was staying there, and his wife with her beautiful hands and that graceful air of nonchalance which pervades her whole person. What has become of you? Are you going to make indigo, or are you going to face the journey up to the hills? Shall I find you in town, etc., etc., etc.?

In order to pronounce the ع¹ in Arabic, Sir William Jones, according to Meninsky, advises one to imitate a calf calling its mother. The explanations given to M. Jourdain by the philosophy-master in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* are clearer than this, I vow. However, I have discovered an infallible procedure, worthy of that philosopher, for pronouncing this letter, غ and ق.²

Take your pupil by the throat, half choke him, and when he is almost suffocated, order him to shout "Ah!"—and the poor devil

¹ *Ed.*—The letter *ain*.

² *Ed.*—*ghain* and *qaf*.

will be talking Arabic without knowing it. In spite of himself, he will have said ع; threaten to murder him unless he shouts "Ra!" and he will say غ; and in trying to shout "Ka!" he will say ق.

I went to luncheon recently with a young infantry officer who often comes to M. Pearson's. He is a tall, handsome young man who has been here four years and is quite well acclimatized. I joined him on the "*Target ground*", where the company was practising shooting. It is four hundred feet from his bungalow, yet his horse was waiting for him there. I had walked over from Titagarh with my gun on my shoulder, without more ado, and could not quite see what use a horse was for an expedition of four hundred feet at half-past six in the morning. On that occasion, at any rate, it was a superfluous precaution, for my host accompanied me to his house on foot, as was natural since I was walking. We had scarcely reached his bungalow when three or four bearers took possession of M. F.'s cap, boots, sabre, etc., etc. The friend with whom he lives came in at the same time, and was disarmed, unbooted and undressed in the same fashion. We all three reclined upon sofas under a verandah and coffee was brought, then the newspapers, and then their favourite dogs came in to be given a piece of bread; then soda-water, then the *abdar* (water-carrier), who had to be scolded because the soda-water was not very cool. They talked about the half-*batta* and groaned over the age of iron in which we live. After which, since breakfast-time was approaching, they went to have a bath and dress. I insisted that they must not stand on ceremony with me, vowing that hosts in dressing-gowns would not take away my appetite. But they replied that to have breakfast comfortably it was necessary to have had a bath, brushed their hair and dressed again, and I had all the difficulty in the world in escaping being undressed, bathed, rubbed down and dressed again myself by my host's servants.

While these young men were at their toilet I read an excellent article in the *Edinburgh Review*.

The table was as neatly and almost as elegantly laid as at

Pearson's. We had breakfast with all the subtlest refinements of English luxury. Next the hookahs came in and were set up on their rugs, and smoking began (here there were renewed lamentations about the half-*batta*). At eleven o'clock one of the young men offered to drive me back to M. Pearson's in his cabriolet, and so I returned by land instead of effecting my return by water as I had thought of doing, having, indeed, sent up the boat belonging to the house at Barrackpore for the purpose.

I should like to see these young men on the way from Moscow to Vilna in the month of December; I have a brother in the army who once made that promenade, and a few others like it in Germany, now fighting, now being beaten, but always sleeping on the ground, winter and summer alike, most usually drinking water and having only a dirty shirt on his back, if he had any shirt at all! . . . Only our marshals had a tent during the war, and generals of division, in command of ten thousand men, were sleeping on the ground. What I see of military life here confounds all my ideas about your former profession.

I seem lacking in "*manliness*" to these young men because I prefer a pony to an Arab and consider it silly to let an animal break one's neck when one has a difference of opinion with it. If they knew that I often take a clyster in the morning, they would certainly despise me; but I consider myself far more "*manly*" than they are, for I dine gaily off a piece of bread and cheese and a glass of wine on the corner of my writing-table, without tablecloth or knife or anything else, and have often slept on my table with a book under my head for a pillow without thinking anything of it. I was not comfortable in this position, but my physical half did not suffer, and on this bad bed, sleeping lightly and often disturbed by mosquitoes, I charmed myself with the visions of my moral half. It is through these that a man ought to enjoy himself, it is through this order of enjoyments alone, if they could be more widely disseminated among men, that equality can exist upon earth; it is to extending the taste for these enjoyments that a philanthropist ought to apply his energies. Though you could not help being corrupted

in England to a certain extent, I hope, my dear fellow, that your southern nature will enable you to enter into my feelings.

Here it is a matter of indifference to me whether I change my glass and knife every moment or not, but in my father's house there is a knife which has been mine for ten years past; there is a glass that is mine too, and a Sèvres china cup that has also become mine through use. I love that knife, glass and cup; I have far greater pleasure in drinking out of them than out of any others, and I maintain that there is poetry and feeling in this preference.

Have you not got an old cloak in which you have ridden some hundreds of leagues in war-time, in which you have slept on the ground a hundred times, or on deck when you were at sea, and which you preserve religiously? All philosophical "*cant*" apart, I declare that I prefer not to be rich. I believe this gives me a greater sympathy for men and things. In our "*unfurnished*" life, as the English would call it, there is greater simplicity, candour and truth, and for this very reason more poetry. The man who is master of a hundred women does not love any of them: they are no more to him than chattels; whereas for our part, we almost know how to make people out of things.

I find it far more picturesque to ride through the majestic solitudes of Santo Domingo and sleep in a hammock slung between two trees, like a strolling player, than to march through India looking straight before one's nose into time and space. An Englishman can see his life marked out in advance. In my opinion a certain proportion of chance is preferable to this uniform rule. Our days are less like one another than those of the English; our whole existence is less automatic.

Good-bye, my friend. Please realize that if I had bothered to write to you with a good pen on good paper, this gossip would seem of no more than legitimate length. But my penknife does not cut, and I find it more convenient to use a bad pen than to trouble to make a good one. What an admirable recipe for happiness it is to know how to go without!

Do please write me a few lines! M. Pearson does not return

till Friday evening; send me them to his house on the day before of your charity, and he will bring me the letter on Friday. I am perfectly well and am going about in the sun.

Yours affectionately . . .

P.S.—I am so much revolted by the ignorance and absolute lack of intelligence of my *munshi* that if you can help me to find another one I think I cannot but gain by the change. I am paying forty rupees a month.

7

(C.F. XX)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Calcutta, November 10, 1829

To lovers of local colour, my dear and excellent father, here is something fairly redolent of Asia. Look at the edge of this Chinese paper,¹ and tell me if that is not local colour with a vengeance! At last I have the pleasure of answering a letter written in reply to one of the first I sent off from this side of the Cape of Good Hope. At that time you were afraid that my fortunate beginnings among my fellow-countrymen at Bourbon might not be kept up among men of another nationality. But you have now known for a long time past—probably without understanding it any better than I do—that the English land of India welcomed me with a crescendo of gratifying attentions and noble hospitality. With people whom I find amiable I translate my French thoughts literally: this is something unaccustomed and new to them, which rouses them and sometimes spurs them to join in the play of repartee. In public I deliver well-rounded, sententious little speeches; but since I am far from speaking pure English, there are still some Gallicisms in my language, for all my efforts, which

¹ This letter, like several of the rest, is written on pink-edged India paper.

raise my truisms above the class to which they really belong, sometimes elevating them to the dignity of profound and novel truths. The oral accompaniment of libations being dispensed with in this country, I have had no opportunity of training myself any further in this type of eloquence, in which I made such a good début in London last year.

You will scold me, but I must confess that I have not addressed a word to more than two or three girls. They are the most insignificant in the world in every respect. Besides, I have found them silly in every country.

For some time past I have fallen far short of the four cups of coffee I drank at Bourbon. By a monstrous abuse of language the English inject into their stomachs under this name cups of warm water with milk, slightly defiled with coal-dust. This is given out to be Mocha coffee. But the change quite suits me, for it seems to me I am no stupider for not drinking real coffee any more.

My epistle to Porphyre will tell you all about the cross-country march upon which I am about to start. Having two years' salary to spend in one, I can embark upon a journey to the hills by careful calculation, but that is all. I shall wait there, working hard in the surrounding regions, till the horizon clears (to quote the newspapers) before planning any further marches.

I shall write to you from Benares, Delhi and Simla, where I hope to meet Milord William Bentinck in the hills; but knocking about as they will do on their way across India my letters will probably reach you only very irregularly; and after that I shall be cut off in some Himalayan fastness, far from Europeans, so shall necessarily go for several months without writing to you. You must then put your well-founded theories on security into practice. After all, people are made neither of glass that breaks nor of butter that melts in the sun. In the army of Bengal only one officer out of twenty-eight dies every year, and one out of thirty-one and a half in the army of Madras; and they do their very best to die. What are the chances against me, then? Sixty to one, perhaps. Well, would they not be the same in Paris?

If you hear rumours that Ranjit Singh has violated the Com-

pany's frontiers, congratulate yourself upon the chance it will give me of seeing an Asiatic war on my way; or if the Himalayas collapse and sink to the level of the plains of Bengal (which is quite as probable as an invasion by Ranjit Singh), remember the hurricane at Bourbon and congratulate yourself upon the juxtapositions of strata that this accident will enable me to see.

Friday, eleven p.m., Calcutta
November 13, 1829

At four o'clock in the morning I rode out and did not return till eight o'clock, having gone no less than twenty miles. These are the last days I shall spend in these parts, so I must not lose a single instant.

Before nine o'clock I was on the way to Garden Reach, where I had to spend the morning making farewell calls; and in the evening I dined with the Chief Justice, the Chevalier Grey. I lunched with Sir Charles Metcalfe, one of the two members of Council, the courteous person who had given me the run of the Botanical Garden while I was staying with Sir Edward Ryan. To-morrow he will send me a letter for his brother, who is collector and administrator at Delhi, where he himself was resident for such a long time; nothing could be more opportune.

Those of his neighbours to whom I was indebted for no more than ordinary courtesies and a few dinners were speedily despatched. I was eager to get to Lady Ryan's, for she had shown me far more than courtesy. I had not seen her for six weeks, but we met again like old friends. However, I had to cross the Ganges in order to say good-bye to the Botanical Garden and conclude certain arrangements. I found the gardener ill and unable to help me with this task, which I could not perform without him. This means a day's delay; I shall be forced to go back there on Monday, accompanied by the head native gardener, a great tall Brahmin with the most handsome and intelligent face, with whom I spent the time which the Englishman's inopportune illness left at my disposal in going over every corner of this huge and magnificent establishment. This time I had no need of any interpreter. He

seemed much surprised at my recent acquisition of Hindustani.

Having crossed the river again and changed my personal adornments at the Chevalier Ryan's for the third time, into black this time (in so far as the suit I salvaged from my semi-shipwreck on the *Zélée* can be referred to as black, though it still does credit to Porphyre's tailor), I went to Sir Charles Grey's house. We three dined together in a not very English way. Englishmen of that type (and I can say as much of my host in the city) never quite get used to the insipidity of their national mode of life. My departure and my journey were the sole subject of a most pleasant conversation. To people of that sort I gave a lively account of the minuteness of my tent and the old-world simplicity of my proposed cuisine on my long pilgrimage; upon which Sir Charles, who squanders a hundred thousand *écus* a year out here, said that I could not do better; and that if he were not a judge and married he would gladly accompany me in these unusual conditions, which, though arduous, were picturesque and well suited for study. And since Englishwomen follow the fortunes of their husbands more than ours do, Lady Grey regretted that she could not join the expedition.

Now you know, dear father, I have always been singularly inclined to find Lady Grey both beautiful, gracious and amiable. Under my influence we began to grow sad and sought some way of relieving the solemn melancholy of my departure. It was then decided that if, as seems highly probable, Lord William Bentinck is prevented from making his expedition to the hills this year, Sir Charles Grey will take advantage of the preparations made for him and slip away in his steamboat as quickly as possible, so as to arrive at Simla before the hot weather and there occupy the only comfortable house in the cantonment, the one that has recently been built on purpose for the Governor-General.

This bears no small resemblance to a castle in Spain; but what more could we have done at table? And after all, why not? The Chief Justice is useful, but not necessary. He will get into a little trouble for granting himself leave for a year, on no pretext save that of his own good pleasure; but nobody can prevent him. His

high office, which gives him precedence immediately after the Governor-General, makes him far more truly his own master and independent on his bench than the Governor-General is on his throne, where he is subject to recall. Moreover, the immense respect which he enjoys on account of his great talents and activity enables him to do things no other man could venture to do. In this case I should sleep in a good bed at Simla for at least a night or two.

I had intended to finish this yesterday evening quietly and quite alone, as I had begun. But Lady Grey had promised to go to some private theatricals in the city, and we all three went together. As was to be expected, it was very boring, and we spent the time talking as we might have done in her drawing-room. She was very lovely that evening, and as I thought of the dullards who thronged round us, I was weak enough to rejoice in her beauty. In the morning these idiots gallop on magnificent Arab horses while I trot along more or less in my dressing-gown, with no riding-boots or whip, on my sturdy but humble little Persian nag. No doubt they rather despise me for this; but in the evening you see them entering the room with some daw in peacock's feathers on their arm, and that is when I have my revenge, as I offer my arm to Lady Grey. But for the happy accident of these aristocratic friendships my position here would have been impossible; but thanks to them nobody could have had more attentions and marks of distinction showered upon him. Good-night, dear father; you may conclude, if you please, from this chapter "*that I am perhaps a too great admirer of the foretold lady, and that it is high time for me to depart with the occasions of meeting her often.*"

Barrackpore, November 21, 1829

"The time is past, those days are gone. Had I waited till evening I could write you fastuously from my camp of Poltagate."

I left Calcutta yesterday evening with my oxen and men. There were some stragglers—among others, unfortunately, the cook; but I had foreseen this eventuality and faced the appetite which I had earned by riding five *kos* by the aid of two biscuits

and a glass of subalcoholized water.

It was unnecessary to go through the performance of the tent, for there was a Government bungalow.

Oh, what a splendid thing a European inn is! I furnished my bedroom with my camp-bed, my shaving apparatus, to which is annexed the medical department, both in the same botanical specimen box, with my guns and pistols in a corner behind my head. I gave the passwords: Vigilance, Responsibility and Prison, and fixed my departure for four o'clock next morning.

By half-past four I was on the march. Things are going less badly than I had feared. The stragglers are rejoining us. I have just enjoyed the pleasing sight of my cook; and my Persian nag's cook, whom nobody has seen, has gone on ahead instead of lagging behind, so I shall shortly find him on the bank of the river which I shall cross to pitch my tent near Chandernagore, where I dine to-morrow with our Governor. I shall leave this letter there with several more.

So here I am on the road. This evening my education as an Indian traveller will be complete when I go to bed (that is, throw myself down fully dressed on a wicker frame inside my little tent, with a pilau in my stomach). Add to this that the weather is fine, mild and cloudy: in linen garments it is perfection. At night I roll myself up in blankets like an Egyptian mummy.

Here, at this military station of the Presidency, under the Governor-General's special orders, I am offered a guard of Sepoys without asking for it. But since my groom and my cook's aide-de-camp, a fellow whom I hope to turn into a handy man and teach to stuff animals, both walk before me carrying guns, while I have pistols in my holsters, and since it would take only a reed to rout all the highwaymen in Bengal, I am declining the useless honour of this guard, in spite of the fine air it would add to my entry into Chandernagore to-morrow. My health is excellent. Adieu, dear father, adieu in earnest this time. I shall write to you from Benares in five weeks' time. I embrace you with all my heart.

(*Corr. inéd.* I, No. LII)

To M. de Melay, Pondicherry

Camp at Kindha [Keendha], Thursday evening, December 3, 1829, 140 miles to the N.N.E. of Calcutta, on the right bank of the Damodar [Dammoodah]

DEAR MONSIEUR DE MELAY,

Here is my first little visiting-card from the desert. For the last fortnight I have ceased sleeping on a mattress in a house, eating bread, drinking wine, seeing white men, or talking English or French. . . . What a change! I wake before daybreak in a tent, and in spite of two or three blankets the cold comes and pulls me by the feet on my wicker couch, before my "*sirdar-bearer*" does. I summon him at once. He wakes the other servants and I call the roll, still from beneath my blankets, a job which is soon done, for I have only nine men to call over. Thereupon my head valet (*valetissime de chambre*), the above-mentioned *sirdar-bearer*, enters with a lantern and a pot of water. In ten minutes' time I am dressed (*paré*) just as they used to dress (*parer*) the *Zélée*, and even the *Médée*.¹ Thereupon a procession enters: first the cook, with a tumulus of rice beneath which are buried the component parts of a chicken; the *syce*, or groom, come to fetch my horse's saddle and bridle; the under-valet, who rolls up the blankets, folds the bed and shuts up my shaving apparatus; and another servant belonging to the hierarchy of Indian domesticity, who is oleaginous in his functions and has, among his other duties, that of keeping my guns and pistols in good order. While all this is going on inside the tent my chief quarter-master, who presides over the tent, is at work outside demolishing it in such a way that, when everything has been

¹ The frigate of which M. de Melay was captain before going to India.

dragged out of it and all the men have come out too, it falls as though by a magic spell, and is immediately rolled up, made into a bundle, and loaded on a waggon, while I reduce my tumulus of pilau to a dead level with my plate as I preside over the operations. At dawn my caravan sets out on the march, the poor devils who have slept out in the open coughing as though they were holding a competition, talking in low tones and with their tails between their legs. My little escort, which is no exception to the rule as regards catching cold, completes the resemblance to a funeral. Can you not imagine, even in Pondicherry, the faces of the conscripts or veterans who will accompany you to Père-Lachaise one day or another, with faces fit for the devil's own funeral? With my gun under my arm, or my hammer, as the case may be, I march for an hour with the main body of my army, and when I am quite sure that everything has been properly stowed away and hear the animal spirits of my men, thawed by the sunshine, beginning to advertise themselves by their usual babble, I mount my horse, followed by three of my servants who have no objection to running behind me, and I carry on my profession of naturalist in the open country.

In accordance with the moral in the fable of the hare and the tortoise, my oxen, which are thorough tortoises, often catch me up before the place fixed for the next halt. Even when I arrive before them I always find two of my sepoys who have gone on ahead and had a temporary establishment got ready for me—by somewhat unconstitutional methods, I greatly fear—pending the arrival of my men. I find a place cleared in the shade under a big tree with a mat for me to sit upon, and every cow in the countryside commandeered to yield me a cup of milk. Then my groom gives me a gigantic portfolio, of which he is in charge, in which I find writing and drawing materials, etc. Much to the detriment of my eyes, which the magnifying-glass strains badly, I examine the plants which I have gathered by the way, and then and there knock together three or four pages of dog Latin about them, conversing the while with a few poor villagers of high caste who adore me as if I were Brahma. As soon as the

heavy baggage has arrived, the tent is pitched, and my bed laid inside it, I retire there and work quietly till the approach of night, unless there is anything in the surrounding country which tempts me to examine it minutely. At sundown I make a reconnaissance like some prince who is the friend of his people, with no guard save my *harkara* or guide, herald and messenger, a poor devil at a salary of six rupees a month, dressed like a doge of Venice and with a face that would be priceless in melodrama, its expression being heightened by a sabre of prodigious length. On returning home I find my dinner ready and the lamps lit. The lamps consist of a candle in a lantern, hanging where the barometer usually hangs. My dinner is another tumult of chicken buried in rice. I drink some milk with it and read some Hindustani, so as not to eat too fast and choke. Beside me is placed a huge glass of sugar and water, with a little brandy to correct its bad quality, and the flap of my tent is let down. And there I am shut in and "*snug*", as the English say, with two, three or four hours' quiet for my work.

Usually, just as I am about to settle down, my generalissimo arrives at the head of two men, whom he commands in most extraordinary English to "Shoulder arms! Present arms!" and all the obligatory rigmarole for posting a sentinel, after which he gravely gives one of them the orders for the night. These are to pace round my tent and waggon, keeping a look-out for robbers, tigers, bears, etc., etc. There are four of them, who relieve each other every two hours. Having made his arrangements the sergeant calls out to me in Hindustani through the canvas: "Your Excellency, you may sleep in peace". To which I reply, also in Hindustani: "Very good". And so I do. I had expected endless annoyances which do not occur, such as being abandoned by the wayside by these servants who are paid in advance, breaking an axle, somebody falling ill, etc., etc. My servants were all engaged three or four days before I started, some of them on the very same day, and one of them in the streets of Calcutta after I had started—in fact, they were picked up anywhere, yet are behaving perfectly well. They are accus-

tomed to the service of officers, so they have a much easier time with me, and a comparatively happy one. Besides, they have no cause to wish me ill, while at the same time, with my long legs and my little Persian horse's very swift ones, besides my whole kit, consisting of guns, pistols, barometers, etc., I am a rather mysterious and very formidable character. Moreover, a small guard of sepoy is very useful for keeping them in order too; and since Milord William Bentinck has authorized me to ask for one wherever it suits me to do so, I shall provide myself with this security during my whole journey.

My present men, whom I obtained at Burdwan, will accompany me eighty leagues from their home. There, and there only, where I enter another English station, I shall send them home and engage some more to escort me as far as Benares, and so on. In Bundelkhand, a less peaceful province than this, I shall increase the number to twenty or so; thus wherever I may be, I shall be not merely on the defensive and respected, but in point of fact absolute master. This line of action costs me no more than a certificate that I have been satisfied with the men, when I dismiss my escort. If I wish to indulge in a luxury of politeness, I add my compliments to their colonel. Except in the course of the considerable detour which I am making at present, far from all decent roads, for love of a coal-mine, the only one that I shall have an opportunity of seeing in India, where there are extremely few, I shall have travelled eighty leagues through Bengal without seeing a single European or official of the English Government. But to-morrow, at the mines of Raniganj [Rannigung], I shall find a sort of foreman of the works of my own colour.

Burdwan, a great rambling native town and the residence of a rajah, who is the richest private individual in India (having at least twelve *lakhs* a year), was formerly the capital of a vast and populous principality with fourteen hundred thousand inhabitants, and is now what the English call a "civil station". These fourteen hundred thousand inhabitants are administered, judged and taxed by a commissioner, a judge, a magistrate, a collector, two half-pay officers in command of a provincial regiment with a strength of

eight hundred and eighty-two, and that is all, if I add a doctor paid by the Company to attend to the health of these gentlemen, and an officer of Engineers engaged in road-making and temporarily attached to the station at present. That makes eight Europeans, or one European to about every two hundred thousand Indians. It goes without saying that the least well-paid of these employees (the soldiers—for instance, the captain of Engineers whose guest I was for thirty-six hours) all have at least two horses each and a good cabriolet, and live in a nice house with a well-kept garden round it. None of them are employees of an inferior grade. I am quite sure that if the salaries of these eight employees were divided between fifty or a hundred of them, as would be the case in the French possessions, the Company would be in no way the gainer in power or respect. Good-night.

Closed at Hazaribagh [Harazubang], two hundred and twenty-eight miles to the west-north-west of Calcutta, on December 16; everything being for the best in the best of all possible worlds; in great haste.

9

(C.F. XXI)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Camp of Hingoli [Hinguelisse] on the banks of the Son [Sône]. Lat. 24° 55, long. (E. of Greenwich) 84° 10; 340 miles to the north-west of Calcutta, 90 miles E.S.E. of Benares, Thursday, December 24, 1829

This time, dear father, I am no longer writing to you from a little corner of Europe transported overseas, but from India. I am no longer speaking English; I am eating no more bread; I am sleeping in no more houses. What a change it is to this strange life after my existence in Calcutta among the multifarious refine-

ments of European opulence grafted on to the luxury of Asia! It is scarcely more than a month since I became an Arab, and I already feel as if I could not have been born anywhere but in a tent. Borrow Arrowsmith's atlas, or, if you like, Major Rennel's map, and set out with me from Calcutta on the evening of November 20.

I sent word to you from Barrackpore, where I halted on the following morning, of the total uneventfulness of my first day's march. On the second day I arrived at Chandernagore, after crossing the Hooghly. I found my place laid and my bed permanently made up in the house of our good governor. . . . He is thirty years older than I am, but at the moment of leaving Europe I felt myself drawn to him by the mass of opinions and feelings common to men of the same country, even if there is otherwise no special individual resemblance between them. However, I firmly resisted his pressing invitation and only stopped with him for one night, in order to give my people and beasts a rest after the hurry and disorder of our departure. On the 22nd I sent them no further than Hooghly, five miles to the north of Chandernagore, on the banks of the river of the same name. All the stragglers had caught us up; and those whose zeal on the first day had carried them beyond my first stopping-place we caught up on the following day on the banks of the river.

At Hooghly I found my baggage parked round a neat bungalow, my bed made, and my first pilau served up in a little room, bare but very clean. I was just about to fall upon my mountain of rice, when a *jemadar*, a sort of native commissioner or servant of superior rank, was despatched to me from a neighbouring house, which was the collector's. I gathered that he wanted to know who I was, so I sent him my passport from Milord Bentinck. A fresh message came back at once inviting me to dine there and spend the night, but I refused on the pretext of my long beard. Thereupon the collector's butler was sent to me with half-a-dozen cooks, tables, chairs, saucepans, spits, etc., to help my own people prepare my dinner (so the collector supposed). I felt it incumbent upon me to respond to this act by a visit, and having

only to walk across a garden I went and thanked my helpful neighbour, accepting nothing of what he offered me but a chair and table. In the evening he sent guards to keep watch round my little encampment during the night, and a *chaprassi* [tchouprassi], a sort of armed messenger, as useful to the traveller as were the late Janissaries in Turkey. This man, who brought with him the politest of notes, had orders to accompany me as far as Burdwan, forty-five miles to the north-west.

This was a notable addition to my caravan, at the head of which I reached this town without difficulty on Thursday morning. It is the chief town of a civil station. There are eight Englishmen here who judge, tax, and, in a word, govern one million four hundred thousand Indians, including a rajah (on paper), the richest individual in India.

I had a letter to the poorest of these eight Englishmen, the officer of Engineers responsible for the roads. My luck here was very different from what I had had in Calcutta—I really could not tell you why or how. Captain Vetch is a Scotchman, religious, etc.; besides, he might at a pinch be my father. His wife, who is much younger than he, is a strict Presbyterian: I ask you, are those favourable conditions for giving rise to sympathy? Yet they have written to me since *con amore*: you would be touched if you could see their letter. In short, when I had been introduced by my host to the other seven Europeans, a great dinner was at once arranged for the next day with the colonel of the regiment in that district. I owed my men a day's rest, and needed one myself to rearrange my equipment before plunging headlong into the jungle. Captain Vetch having spoken to me of the advisability of a guard in districts not frequented by any Europeans, I sent a request for one to the chief official, accompanied by my passport. It was at once returned to me with five sepoys in full uniform, having cartridges in their cartridge-boxes, etc., who were placed at my orders as far as the first military station, Hazaribagh, eighty leagues from Burdwan.

So from Burdwan onwards I have travelled only with an escort, and I shall be surrounded by this protection as long as I am in

India: Lord William had not told me what a magical effect would be produced by his firman. Here my little guard, which I am free to increase according to circumstances, is but a small addition to my personal security, which would be almost perfect even without it; but it removes any fear of theft. When I set out in the morning on horseback with some of my men and two of my sepoy, I am sure that my carts will follow me, and that my servants will not pillage them, making off after the "kill". No obstacle will stop them: they may get stuck in a rut, they may sink into the bed of a torrent, but if my oxen are brought to a halt at the foot of a mountain which they are unable to cross, my sergeant in his red coat will manage to find people to help him. Where should I be to-day without them? Drowned, no doubt, in the mud of some river near Burdwan. For a month past I have been enjoying the sweets of absolute power: it is really a most convenient thing. It goes without saying that I made the most temperate use of it, and you know that under a Marcus Aurelius this, the most simple of all forms of government, is at the same time the best.

When my baggage reaches the spot which I have indicated for camping, my generalissimo, with the most awe-inspiring air, comes to report that all is in good order; then he hurries on the small operations with the tent. At night he comes in to take my orders for the following day and to inform me that he has posted his sentinel at my canvas door. And so the pistols and guns slumber in their holsters and cases, unless the neighbourhood is very fertile in tigers, in which case I always have ready to hand the wherewithal to make, at least, plenty of noise. You know how Porphyre provided for that.

But let us return to the map. From Burdwan I shall march for seven days towards the north-west on the left bank of the Damodar [Dammhoudoeurr], known as Dammoudah, Downa, etc., by Messieurs the geographers (which may, however, be the correct pronunciation of its name in other parts of its course), passing through Mankur [Manncour] and Dignagar [Dignagur]. Here I shall come to the jungle (pronounced in French *djônguëlle*).

I must confess that I was greatly disappointed. I had imagined an impenetrable forest, offering the whole wealth of form and colour of tropical vegetation, bristling with thorny trees, intertwined with bushy shrubs, with creepers growing right up to the tops of the tallest trees and descending gracefully in cascades of flowers. At Rio de Janeiro and Santo Domingo I had seen the scattered components of this picture. But far from it! I found myself among woods even more monotonous than those of Europe; beneath, a few meagre shrubs; and instead of the distant roar of tigers, the sound of the woodman's axe.

Since then I have seen scenes less remote from those painted by my imagination. I have travelled for a hundred leagues along a road crossed by no path, edged and walled in to right and left by the forests or deserted heaths across which it has been opened up. I made my way into these solitudes by marching along the dry beds of a few torrents, which were pretty, but no more. As for tigers, I am bound to believe in them, for at Hazaribagh I saw and touched one killed six hours after I had passed along the road, and on the following day a leopard of the same vintage; besides, my English host at the mines of Raniganj on the banks of the Damodar bears on his face seventeen scars, the trace of scratches left on it by one. But being incredulous by nature, I shall believe in them better when I have seen as much as the shadow of the tail of a living one. You will see: after travelling through India as nobody else has done, I shall have to come back to Paris and see one at the Jardin des Plantes. However, have no fear that my incredulity will expose me to any danger, in this world, at least: I am always on my guard, and never go about on foot without a gun, nor do I go reconnoitring alone.

An introduction from the owner of the mines at Raniganj (on the banks of the Damodar, twelve leagues to the east of Raghunathpur) to the agent in charge of the work made me master of his house. After sleeping in my clothes for seven days on a mat stretched on a frame I found the touch of sheets in a bed very soft against my bare skin. I stayed at Raniganj for thirty-six hours, thirteen of which I spent up to my knees in mud and cold water a

hundred feet below ground, with my hammer, compass and knotted cord ready to hand. This is the only coal-mine in India that is being worked, and I spared no pains to make myself acquainted with it both geologically and industrially. There can be no doubt that at Calcutta a thirteenth part of the hardships or miseries of this examination would have given me a good cold on the chest at least; but I knew, and you know from an experience extending back over some ten years now, that my constitution undergoes a curious change when I am travelling, which enables it to gain increased strength and pass gallantly through quantities of things which would be serious obstacles to it if they presented themselves in the course of a quiet, regular life. In Calcutta I was constantly catching cold at a change of three or four degrees in temperature [six or seven degrees Fahrenheit]. Now, however, at three o'clock the thermometer stands at $30\frac{1}{2}$ degrees [87° F.] in my tent, which has no tree to shelter it from the sun; to-morrow morning at three or four o'clock the cold will come and nip my toes, as it does every day under three blankets, and the temperature will have fallen twenty-two degrees [40° F.]; yet I do not catch cold.

From Raniganj to Raghunathpur, where I rejoined what passes for a high road (the "new military road"), I spent two and a half days marching through the sands of the Damodar, a hard labour for my oxen, aided by fifty more or less well-disposed helpers who were invited to push the wheels. Next—O abomination of desolation!—on arriving at the other side of the river, no road! We had to advance through the scrubby undergrowth, sometimes taking advantage of a ravine. Blessings upon the sepoys! It was enough to break the arms, legs and skulls of both beast and man; it was a miracle that nothing came to grief but my lantern. The children in some poor hamlets buried in the midst of these forests had never seen any Europeans, and they paid me back for the annoyance I must have caused a few poor devils of Turks twenty years ago, when I followed them in the street, staring greedily right into their faces, as little rascals of that age do.

Though the engineers have not shown much skill, the road is

always good after Raghunathpur, at least for those on horseback; and my oxen and carts proceed along it in fine style after their trials. Relays of porters are stationed along this road to carry travellers riding post in palanquins; I have met two during the last sixteen days. There are also bungalows to receive them, as well as those who travel as I am doing by stages of so many miles a day. The distance between them corresponds to the distance that oxen, camels, elephants and servants on foot can travel in a day—five, six, seven or eight leagues a day, according to the difficulty of the road. In these bungalows are to be found two very clean rooms, two cots, two tables and six chairs. Two families can find lodging in them at a pinch. Three servants are attached to the service of each of them, and are chiefly useful to those travelling unattended by palanquin. I found the one at Raghunathpur occupied by a collector on his rounds, with his wife and a little child. He has an elephant, eight carts like mine, two cabriolets and a special carriage for his child, two palanquins, six saddle and carriage horses, and, to move them from one bungalow to another, from sixty to eighty porters, not to speak of at least sixty household servants. He dresses, changes his clothes again, breakfasts, has tiffin, dines and has tea in the evenings exactly as he does in Calcutta, dispensing with nothing. Glass and china are unpacked and packed up again overnight; four times a day there are brilliantly polished silver, clean linen, etc., etc.

I appeared amid these splendours with a beard of ten days' growth and mud up to a foot above my knees, politely claiming the half of the house to which I had a right; though, not expecting any visitors, he had taken possession of the whole. On my declining to accept a place at the table, which seemed to be laid for half a dozen people, it was immediately removed and carried into the other room. I awaited the arrival of my pilau among quantities of stones and plants in mine. I despatched a note to the unknown person offering him a bed in my room for himself or any gentleman of his party, whereupon he came and thanked me, saying that he was alone with his wife. He stayed talking for a long time, extremely puzzled by the incongruity between my

clothes and my way of speaking. I amused myself by adding to his bewilderment, talking about all the powers that be in Calcutta like one who knew them perfectly well, as well as on general subjects of conversation, politics and literature. After that, having found him a thoroughly good fellow, I told him who I was, and we arranged matters between us. Like me, he was moving from one bungalow to another every day on his way to Benares, and I inconvenienced him extremely by arriving every evening at the same stopping-place. During the day-time he reduced me to starvation, for his people did not leave a single glass of milk available for two leagues round, and then in the evenings I came and took half his room. He offered to stay where he was for one day and only resume his marches after I had gone on. I preferred to travel double my usual distance in one day so as to get ahead of him, thus gaining time without making him lose any. And so, after meeting for a day or two, which sufficed for me to find out in what style these gentlemen travel, I left him behind; and though he followed very close upon my heels, I have heard no more of him since.

But I found afterwards that my little tent with a candle was better lit in the evening and far livelier than the bungalow, and that I was far more comfortable in it, with my people sleeping round it and my horse at the door, than within four bare walls, chilly as my canvas; so I returned to the desert, and am camping and shall continue to camp in defiance of all bungalows, *chokis* [*chawatis*], *serais* and *caravanserais* in India. Besides, along this road, the only one where they are decent, being reserved for European gentlemen, the use of them is not free, far from it. The Company charges you two rupees a day (five francs), and you cannot give less than a rupee to the servants whom it maintains there. This is not regarded as an objection, it is not even mentioned by the English, all of whom the Company pays magnificently; but to me ten louis more or less between Calcutta and Benares are very well worthy of consideration; it is almost half what this journey will cost me.

The same evening

Advancing west-north-west from Raghunathpur, I once more entered the forests, which have been cleared a little round that place, and again crossed the Damodar, near Gomoh [Gomeah]. For a week I travelled across a plateau raised from four to five metres above the plain, the level of which I calculated at several points, constantly going up and down hill, crossing several big torrents daily, and camping at night in the vicinity of some group of huts.

Hazaribagh, which is scarcely more than a village, is the seat of an assistant resident. The English station consists of a resident, the colonel of the local irregular corps, with a subordinate officer and a doctor. I had a letter for the latter, in whose house I stayed for twenty-four hours. A note containing the usual compliments, backed up by my passport, was at once sent to the resident, and returned with the fresh escort for which I had asked to relieve my men from Burdwan, and an invitation to dinner. Since the two houses were next door to each other, I called during the day and the call was returned before dinner-time. My host was the wreck of what had once been a man of great fashion, very witty and amiable, but ruined, though not stupefied, by drink.

Having set out from Hazaribagh again on the 17th, after a day's rest which my men badly needed, I am now on my way to Benares, where I shall arrive on December 31 or January 1, marching for a hundred leagues without halting for a single day.

I have to count the leagues, for the mountains are so far away! Nearly four hundred leagues more! And the hot winds at the foot of them are so terrible! Sometimes they start in the early days of March, but in other years not till April. You have read Bernier's account of his journey to Kashmir with the Badshah Aurungzeb. Do you remember how he suffered when he was overtaken in the plains of Lahore by the breaking of the spring monsoon? I must leave Delhi at latest on March 1. It is unfortunate that I could not leave Calcutta ten days earlier; but you saw my perplexities and the troubles which prevented this and kept me there till November 20.

The détour that I made for the purpose of seeing the coal-mines in the district of Burdwan brings the distance I have travelled up to two hundred leagues. I did more than half on foot, the rest on horseback. I start at four, five or six o'clock in the morning, according to the phases of the moon and the character of the country. I do not arrive till midday, two, three or sometimes four o'clock in the afternoon, at the end of my day's march, during the whole of which I am in the sun, like a native. I eat my meal by moonlight. Before mounting my horse I eat, still by moonlight, a cup of well-sweetened rice and milk prepared overnight, put a biscuit in my pocket, and thus provisioned I accept as a stroke of good luck, though without at all depending upon it, any cup of milk that my cook, who is sent on ahead with a sepoy, can succeed in finding for me on the way. I dine when I am ready, if dinner is ready by the time I am; if not, it has to wait till whatever time that may be. Fortunately the uniformity of my diet makes up for my irregular meal-times. I invariably dine off a chicken cooked with a pound of rice, quantities of ghee, or native butter, which is detestably rancid, but to which I have grown amazingly accustomed, and a little spice, according to the fashion of the country, but very little—a dinner like that of a Mussulman with an income of twelve hundred francs. I drink two large glasses of water with a few drops of brandy, sometimes only pure water. The whole thing, including the illegitimate profits of my *khansama* (for I have no cook but my butler), costs some fifty francs a month, half of which is robbery. I forgot to say—most inappropriately, for at this very moment I am drinking a big cup of it—that in the evening I sometimes have tea. When the weather is cold I find it very pleasant, for it keeps me awake when I have a lot of work to do and am very sleepy.

After all, whatever may be said against the laziness, stupidity and mendacity of servants in this country, their service is most convenient and not at all expensive. For twelve francs a month I have a groom who has my horse saddled and bridled in readiness to start at the time ordered the evening before. This man

follows me like a shadow; when I gallop he runs on foot, for such is the rule. If I dismount he is there to lead the horse by the bridle or stand waiting, according to what I sign to him to do, and I mount and dismount ten or fifty times a day. The other servant attached to the horse, the *ghassiara*, has gone on ahead; and I find him at the spot appointed for the halt that evening, with a bundle of herbage, grass, leaves or roots which he has gathered for the beast to eat. If I include these two men's wages in my cavalry budget, its upkeep costs me forty-five francs a month.

My harvest of specimens of all sorts, which I gather as I go along, calls for treatment in which I require the assistance of a few servants; but this type of service is not included in any of the precedents of the Indian domestic hierarchy. So when I told my water-carrier to put his goat-skin down on the cart during the day and march along by me with a large cardboard box under his arm, he told me that was not his business, and said it in a very uppish tone. Without the slightest hesitation I gave him a good kick in the seat; for had I not done so, another would have started saying that it was not his work to carry my gun, another my hammer, and so forth. I am very careful not to order them to do anything forbidden by the laws of their religion; but apart from that I imperatively insist upon receiving from each of them all the services he can render me in addition to his own speciality. I hope the majority of my men will have had time to get used to this little revolution before we arrive at Benares, and that all I shall have to do in that city will be to make a few changes for the better. When I left Calcutta I was afraid I might be left in the lurch on the way by those whom I had paid in advance, but nothing of the sort occurred to any of them. They would not dare to do it now that I have my escort; besides, at present I am in their debt.

I am getting hardened to cold as well as to heat. It is true that I have covered my whole body with flannel, but over that I wear none but garments of linen or cotton, as in Calcutta during the summer. Having got bored with taking off my stockings con-

stantly to wade through torrents, I now wear them only to sleep in at night. Before going to bed in the evening I also put on a second undervest of very thick flannel over my day-clothes—a very roomy one, which I keep on during the morning on the march till the sun makes it uncomfortable; but there are days when the wind is so keen that I never take it off. My hat, made at Pondicherry of date-palm leaves and covered with black silk, is shinier than ever. In the morning I pull it down over my ears like a cap and find it very warm. It assumes whatever shape I desire: it is an admirable invention designed by myself, light, waterproof, strong, etc., etc.

December 25, on the other
bank of the Son

This is a sea of sand not less than a league in breadth, and my waggons took four hours to cross it. To lend animation to this desert Providence held in reserve two elephants and some thirty camels, which it sent forward to meet my caravan in a long string. I am going to push on this evening by a forced march as far as Sasaram, an ancient Indian city.

Not a tree to shelter me. I am writing to you beneath a burning sun, yet only just now I found the water in the river freezing; but I am taking advantage of my horse's breakfast-time. It is a meal he rarely enjoys, subject as he is to the accidents which decide his master's hours. Yet he holds out well against fasting by day and cold by night; and since he does not seem to me to have wasted away during the last five weeks, there is no reason why he should not carry me to the ends of the earth. The beggar provides considerable justification for the reputation for ill-temper enjoyed by those of his colour, which is a chestnut if ever there was one. Sometimes he throws me: that is when I am stupid enough to tussle with an unreasoning beast. Every time I fall off I promise myself that in future I will imitate Figaro, who gave way to fools instead of quarrelling with them. Then, when the occasion arises, I forget my prudent plans and try to make him go past something that scares him; upon which there is a struggle, accompanied by rearing and a score of other

abominable tricks, the names of which can be told you in detail by Porphyre, who is such a fine horseman. However, we always make it up amicably in the following fashion: one day he gives in, and next time I yield—to the feelings which carry me away. Notwithstanding these rebellions, which are, however, pretty rare, I ride along on my palfrey reading, dozing or studying my plants under the magnifying-glass, and congratulate myself heartily upon my purchase.

My Hindustani vocabulary increases every day. Far from preventing my men from talking near me, I ask them to do so, in order to accustom my ear to those inflexions which, to one with a good ear, are so different from those of European languages. I chat with them and the soldiers of my escort. I try to enter into their way of living, their feelings and ideas. I steep myself in India, instead of merely dipping the tip of my finger into it, as many Englishmen do who pretend to study it. In this respect again my escort will be very useful to me. The men forming my little caravan, both servants and soldiers, are not the least interesting subject of observation that I find on my way. The English encourage the higher castes in particular to enter military service. Among my five men from Hazaribagh I have two Brahmins, the rest being Rajputs; my sergeant from Burdwan was also a Brahmin.

I have given up any attempt to understand the Hindu theogony. I am convinced that it has always been an unintelligible rigmarole to those Europeans who have claimed to explain it: Bernier, Sir William Jones, etc. It seems to me impossible to establish the hierarchy of the various castes. I tried my hand at it with my naturalist's small knack for classification; and I convinced myself that there is no exact correspondence between those in one part of India and those bearing the same name in other strange regions. It is impossible to establish what we botanists call a "critical synonymy" among them. On my return to Europe I shall try to obtain better information about whatever is accessible in this line without a knowledge of Sanskrit. You have certainly read the *Theatre of the Hindus* by M. Wilson; it will be a novelty to me.

I saw the book every day in Calcutta, as well as its author very frequently, but found no leisure for more than his excellent preface. Wilson has a job corresponding to that of M. Darcet at the Mint, besides several others, all well-paid sinecures. He is certainly the best pensioned of all men of letters, besides which he is the greatest authority upon Sanskrit in the world at present, and a man of wit and taste to boot. He is remarkably like Frederick the Great of Prussia.

My solitude does not weigh upon me in the least. I am quite sure I shall spend my six months' retreat among the mountains, not seeing a single European, without any sadness. Every moment of my life which is not filled with study is occupied by sweet and tender thoughts. There are times in the past which seem to me like dreams. Sometimes I cannot believe that it was I who did this or that, or went here or there. . . . At times I doubt my own identity, and in this land of the transmigration of souls I almost suspect that somebody else's soul has ousted my own. The well-spring of enthusiasm has dried up, and when the cold keeps me lying awake beneath my blankets I contemplate the world, not like an actor in these varied scenes, but like a critical and disinterested spectator of them. I no longer *feel* things in the past: I merely recall them, and thus I judge what once went on within me as I do that which exists outside me.

Besides, admiration for the beauties of nature has its virginity, which is soon destroyed by enjoyment. To me Santo Domingo will always be the ideal of tropical beauty: I cannot call to mind without emotion the first tropical scenes among which I found myself. Perhaps the deep impression they made upon me was the result of my own state of mind, and if it were granted to me to see them again, perhaps I should no longer find their beauties so moving. I have written this to Frédéric. It is for love of him, too, that I love the corner of the world that he inhabits.

M. de Humboldt has very happily described this first impression of scenes in equatorial regions: a physician, too, should be more sensitive to the general impression when the study of the natural details does not close his eyes to the effect as a whole.

You will justly conclude from this soliloquy that I do not stain my paper with poetic prose. I write a great deal in every sort of mood without the least effort, according to my state of mind or stomach and the quality of my pen. Nobody can be always sublime, always dignified, always gay and smiling. After a geological description comes a confidential page which none but myself is meant to read. If I wrote in any other way I should be afraid of lying. Adieu, dear father; adieu till I get to the holy city. Tell my friends that their memory follows me and charms many moments of my solitary life, but that I have no time to write all the affectionate things that are in my heart. I do not tell you to set your mind at rest on my score, for I flatter myself that the two hundred leagues I have just travelled with such good fortune are eloquent enough to make any request of this sort superfluous. Adieu; mind you keep as well as I am, and let Porphyre imitate me too. I wish I could send you some of the sun, of which I have too much during the day, in return for a little of the warmth of European houses in the morning. Consult M. Azais on the possibility of this change as you pass by.

December 31, 1829

On this, the last day of the year, I arrived in the holy city. I brought with me an introduction from Milord Bentinck, one from my friend at Burdwan for a very rich rajah, who is going to call upon me to-morrow, etc., and two from the Chief of Staff—the friend of Colonel Lafosse, who is also a friend of mine and the most amiable of men—for two of his fellow-officers, good friends of his. The first of them who saw me kept me there, placing his house at my disposal; after breakfasting I found an elephant at my door to take me on my other calls. Next the Master of the Mint,¹ the first person whom I went to see on my moving mountain, a man whom I already knew from his letters as the wittiest in India, would not let me proceed alone, but insisted upon presenting me to everybody. The elephant was sent home, where his back will be at my exclusive orders for the short duration of my stay here; and I made my

¹ James Prinsep.

round of visits in the carriage of the "*spirited mint master*". He was expecting me to be his guest, and as a preparation for receiving me had provided himself with letters from you and Porphyre, one from Taschereau and one from M. Victor, introducing me to a Doctor —, another from Madame Lebreton, a long one from Miss Pearson, one from Sir Charles Metcalfe, etc., etc., all addressed to me here *poste restante* by the kindly governor of Chandernagore, who had scraped them together, some from Pondicherry, some from Calcutta, and sent them post-free under his own official cover to await me here. I read and re-read the whole lot. Add to this that I had ridden five leagues by night so as to arrive at the holy city at sunrise, and I walked through it on foot, favoured by the most lovely morning, like those of Provence in the month of May. Both my heart and my head are in a whirl. I smiled on reading your fears as to what reception I should get in this country. No, we in France should not do for any foreigner what has been done for me here. The London rivulet swelled to a river in Calcutta, and by now it has become a sea. Half the letters I leave behind me on my way bring me four times as many again: I shall need an extra camel to cope with this geometrical progression. Forgive the bad taste of these figures written under the influence of the Eastern sun.

I shall return to you, dear father, before leaving this place; I must leave you for to-day. Yesterday evening I cut my beard of a fortnight's growth. I looked like Robinson Crusoe, and dined in my tent hardly more magnificently than he did. To-day I am putting on black silk stockings as if I were going to a ball in Paris or London. I am going to dine with a dozen Europeans who govern a portion of the British Empire. Their wives will be dressed in the Paris fashion of six months ago. These are no vulgar nabobs, characters who no longer exist except in the plays performed in the Strand theatres in London. The conversation during the evening will be both solid and elegant; they will think out how best to show me as much as possible of the marvels of the city during the few days I am to stay here. Trust in my star. There is certainly more in this

constant series of successes than playing my cards cleverly: it is a succession of happy accidents which have ceased to be such by dint of repetition. But the greatest miracle of all is that I have never had to suffer before others on account of my poverty!

January 1, 1830

Any given thousand of our fellow-countrymen, coming to this country with twice and three times the amount of money I have brought with me, would probably fail to be received anywhere. But what of that! My host here, an infantry captain who is acting as military assistant commissioner, has fifty thousand francs a year; and you know that everything is on this scale. By a unique favour I am dispensed from being rich; what is more, my comparative poverty has been nothing but a source of gratification to my self-esteem. A few of my acquaintances, those who were my greatest friends, knew about it and found no difficulty in accepting it. Only rarely did I have to hire a carriage to go and dine with the Chief Justice of India; when I was not his next-door neighbour at Garden Reach, he would ask what time would suit me and come to fetch me. On seeing these attentions the crowd of fools no doubt supposed that I possessed some mysterious virtues more worthy of esteem than the possession of a cabriolet, and took them on trust.

Girls with no money who have not succeeded in getting married in England arrive here in cargoes for the purpose of selling themselves—in the most honourable sense of the word, of course—to young officers and civilians who receive, in addition to their appointment and the assurance of a fortune sufficient for two, orders to go and be rich all by themselves in some village two hundred leagues from Calcutta and govern an area equal to that of several French departments. Those whose posts are very lucrative choose a wife from the society of Calcutta as they choose a public woman in the street: it should be understood, of course, that the small number of families forming the society in which I moved are an exception to this rule. Matrimonially it is the worst possible country for a man of my sort.

There are still enormous salaries in India, but there are no longer huge fortunes to be made here. The daughters of those who get rich here are brought up with such luxurious habits that they are only suitable for marrying collectors or people of that sort. Besides, the English, who are the people most addicted to marriage in the world, have children by dozens, and there is no fortune that will survive division by such a Christian quotient. And lastly, the young ladies of the most polished classes, which are also the most opulent I have ever had occasion to meet, are more insignificant here than in any other country. They are as much afraid of a married woman of twenty-four's very small amount of sense as of the polar ice. Not that the latter are gay, indeed; but the few serious ideas that marriage always drives into even the emptiest heads terrify the complete insignificance of those upon whom the spirit has not yet descended.

Miss Pearson is the only one I have known who was worthy of the esteem and consideration of a sensible man. The poor girl, whom I left very ill on my departure from Calcutta, writes to me here that she is dying; I shall have to send the letters to England which I have written her on the road. The doctors are sending her home without any delay; her mother is accompanying her. I fear my letter may arrive too late. But whatever happens, even if chance were to bring us together again under the same roof, we shall never be more to each other than we are at present. Though sensible beyond her age, which is twenty, and of a very serious turn of mind, she did not seem to notice that I was still a young man; and she sometimes talked to me about matters of sentiment as she might have done to some old friend of her father's or her own.

It pains me, dear father, to upset all your castles in Spain. But if I allowed you to build them undisturbed, you would end by believing in them, as in the famous system raised upon the ruins of all the rest (in the style of the *Essences réelles*), and would frown upon me on my return unless I were accompanied by a family like that of King Priam.

What a delight your letters were! They counteracted the

surprise and annoyance caused me on alighting in the sacred city by the news of La Bourdonnaie, Mangin and Co.'s ministry. I cannot answer your nine pages, which are as good as fifty, or my letter would never end. Your affection indulges in illusions on my behalf which I cannot share, but which touch me greatly. Your confidence in my strength of character makes me very happy. Whatever adverse circumstances I have to face, you know that I have within me a weapon of resistance, in the shape of a curious principle of inward satisfaction, a simplicity of tastes which is hardly compatible with either my age or my bringing-up, a sort of self-contained pride which will console me during my worst days, if any such come. There are a thousand degrees of misfortune the risk of which I shall henceforth encounter from a standpoint of superiority.

During my last days in Calcutta I did not fail to write to nearly everybody. I must now give up this correspondence, in which I should fritter away what I must keep for my own purposes. Adieu, dear father; my next will be from Delhi, in two months' time. I embrace you and Porphyre with all my heart, as well as the eternally absent Frédéric. It is all I can do for them to-day.

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(C.F. XXIV)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Delhi, March 10, 1830

MY DEAR FATHER,

Starting from Benares on January 6, I followed the left bank of the Ganges till opposite Mirzapur, where I crossed the river, and, fortified with *parwanas* (firmans, local passports) from the magistrate at Mirzapur (to whom Lord William Bentinck had given me a letter) for the independent rajahs of Baghelkand and Bundelkhand, I turned aside from the direct route to the Himalaya mountains and plunged into those provinces, where I knew

I was sure to find plenty of interest of a geological and mineralogical order. I passed through Rewah (E.S.E. of Benares), where I received a polite letter from the Rajah. From thence to Panna, celebrated for its diamond-mines; and after wandering about the top of the plateau of Bundelkhand for a fortnight, I descended from it with great difficulty above Ajaigarh [Adjighur], the residence of another Rajah. There I had to allow a little rest to my men and beasts, exhausted by their long marches through the mountains. A happy chance enabled me to find many things of great interest during this forced halt. Since returning to the plains at Kalinga, it has never since happened to me to be separated from my baggage and to have to bivouac, fasting, among inquisitive savages, as I had to do several times among the hills; since February 1 my little tent has always followed me. At Banda [Bondah], a civil and military station, the chief town of the English Bundelkhand, I overhauled my outfit, sent back my escort to Mirzapur, and, having refitted, started out again on the road to the northern provinces after a halt of only twenty-four hours. I passed through Hamirpur [Hammerpoor], where the Betwa joins the Jamna, and from thence to Kalpi, on the right bank of the latter river, which I crossed here and entered the Doab, the region lying between the two rivers, the Jamna and Ganges (*Doab*, the Sanskrit equivalent of *duo aqua*).

The winter had come to an end on February 1 at Banda. The nights ceased to be cool, the days became very hot. However, I continued on my way, confidently trusting in my regimen, which I had gradually reduced to a native simplicity. I was somewhat taken aback by some violent storms in the Doab. Porphyre knows what rain means when one has no house to shelter one. At long intervals an old mosque or a Hindu temple served me as a refuge; but most often I had only a tree for shelter, and sometimes a tree stripped of all its foliage.

I arrived at Agra on Saturday, February 20. It was the first large Moslem city I had seen; it is full of memorials of the recent grandeur of the house of Timur. I stayed there three days, days of rest for my men, who stood in great need of it, but days of

extreme fatigue for me. In the intervals of attending to my collections I tired out three horses a day. English hospitality is splendid as a general rule. Men overwhelmed with work acted as my guides round the stations at which I halted; not only did they lend me their elephants, horses and carriages, but they always accompanied me when I visited the ruins. There are many to whom I became genuinely attached, and the memory of whom will always be most pleasant to me. The many excellent introductions with which I was provided by Lord William Bentinck for his civil proconsuls, and by Colonel Fagan, the Chief of Staff to the army, for his brother officers and friends, into which two classes all the letters fall which I have so far had occasion to use, make me sure of the most gratifying reception everywhere, and I should have to be very unfortunate in my choice not to feel assured by the evening that I am given this welcome for my own sake. I think and feel in my own fashion, and express this quite simply and spontaneously in language which, I am told, is always correct, sometimes unusual, strange and often picturesque. By acting in this way I at once force the English stiffness to relax. I turn all the English with whom I remain for twenty-four hours into good-natured people (*bonnes gens*)—into French people. |

Muttra and Brindaban [Bindrabund] are two great Hindu cities isolated in a region that is entirely Moslem. I saw both of them on the way here from Agra.

And lastly Delhi: Delhi is the most hospitable place in India. Do you know what almost happened to me this morning? I very nearly became the light of the world, the wisdom of the State, the ornament of the land, etc.; but luckily I escaped with no worse than a scare. This is the explanation: it will make you laugh. The Great Mogul, Shah Mohammed Akbar Razi Badshah, to whom the political resident¹ sent a petition that he might present me to His Majesty, graciously held a *darbar* so as to receive me. Having been escorted to the audience by the resident with considerable pomp, including a regiment of infantry, a strong escort of cavalry, and an army of servants and attendants, the whole

¹ Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe, then collector at Delhi.

completed by a troop of richly caparisoned elephants, I paid my respects to the Emperor, who was gracious enough to confer upon me a *khilat*, or robe of honour, which was put on my back with great ceremony under the supervision of the prime minister; and disguised as a khaimakam, like Taddeo (do you remember *L'Italiana in Algeri*?), I made a second appearance at his court. Next, with his own imperial hands, the Emperor (and note, if you please, that he is descended in the direct line from Timur, or Tamerlane) attached a couple of jewelled ornaments to my hat (a grey one, previously dressed up by his vizier as a turban). During this imperial farce I kept a gloriously straight face, for there are no looking-glasses in the throne-room, and all I could see of my fancy dress were my two long black-trousered legs sticking out below my Turkish dressing-gown. The Emperor enquired whether there was a King in France and whether English was spoken there. He had never seen a Frenchman, if I except General Perron, who was in charge of him when he was a prisoner among the Mahrattas; and he seemed to scrutinize with great attention the burlesque figure resulting from my not very solid five feet eight, with long hair, spectacles and my oriental rig-out over my black suit. At the end of half an hour he withdrew, and I retired with the resident in procession. The drums rolled out a salute as I passed along the ranks in my embroidered muslin dressing-gown. Why were you not there to rejoice in your off-spring!

It goes without saying that I found Shah Mohammed Akbar Razi a venerable old gentleman and the most adorable of princes. But he really has a handsome face, a fine white beard and the expression of a man who has long suffered misfortune. The English have left him all the honours of his royal state and console him for the loss of his power with an annual pension of four million francs. Do not tell this story to those of my friends who are so fond of local colour, and at the carnival in 1833 or 1834 you shall see whether they do not consider my oriental disguise a very poor imitation: whereupon I will tell them what this poor imitation really is. The resident translated Victor Jacquemont, travel-

ling naturalist, etc., by "Mr. Jacquemont, Sahib Bahadur", which means "M. Jacquemont, lord victorious in war". And that was how the grand master of ceremonies announced me.

This victorious war-lord is occupied with anything but war at present. He is poisoning with mercury and arsenic the collections he has got together during the five to six hundred leagues he has travelled, and packing them up in order to leave them here during his journey in the Himalayas. There is no lack of variety in my wandering life. I never go out in a carriage or palanquin or on an elephant here without a brilliant escort of cavalry—a polite attention on the part of my host. I have a sumptuous house to myself, surrounded by superb gardens. If I dine out, it is with the general or some other great person, and I do not stoop to anything less. Yet it is probable that I shall spend three months of the summer in a smoky hut of appalling filthiness on the other side of the Himalayas, and in the meantime—for I have still to climb very high and go very far—Heaven knows through what places I shall pass. Whatever may befall, do remember that during my recent vicissitudes between Calcutta and Delhi I did not experience the slightest indisposition, and (a prosaic matter, but one of the highest importance) I have had the praiseworthy talent of remaining within my estimated expenditure.

Next Saturday, the 13th, I resume my solitary and wandering life. I shall camp fifty leagues from here to the north-west, near a town called Kaithal [Kythul] in the territory of the Sikhs. The first secretary of embassy [assistant commissioner] will arrive at my camp on the 20th with a huge train of men, horses and elephants, and, joining our unequal fortunes, we shall proceed eastwards together as far as the spot where the Ganges debouches from the mountains. My prospective companion's object is to hunt wild boar and tigers. To give himself this pleasure he is going to spend some ten thousand francs in a month or six weeks—but he has sixty thousand a year; he is, moreover, a bachelor about my age, marked out by his talents for a great career in this country. I shall have a partner who will be most instructive about the affairs of the country, and the opportunity

of seeing and taking part in exercises which will naturally redound to the profit of my collections. Mr. Trevelyan affects to be extremely gratified that I am so good as to permit him to be my companion. These people will make me conceited—unless you think this has already happened. Yet I do not approach them on false pretences: I do not tell them I am rich or noble; I do not tie my tie more smartly than in Paris; my coat is not fashionable, and after nearly two years' existence, eight months on board ship, and a fortnight's submersion during the hurricane at Bourbon, it is extremely faded. In spite of this there are no marks of distinction that they do not lavish upon me.

Do not be afraid of the Sikhs. They are cunning thieves, but I am not allowed to go among them without a strong escort. When Mr. Trevelyan's little army joins mine, we shall travel like conquerors. As for the dangers of tiger- and lion-hunting, I have often enquired: "How many English '*gentlemen*' have been eaten while out hunting since the days of M. Hastings?" Answer: "Not one".

Panipat, March 17

I am writing to you to-day from the celebrated battle-field where the fate of India has been decided so many times.

You may laugh at such celebrity, which is new to you: Panipat or Lilliput are probably all one to you, my dear father; but you must change your ways in this respect and become a little bit Indian for love of me. Is not d'Eckstein there to enlighten you? ¹ I should like to give you a less sublime introduction to the history of this country; but I know none save that of Mill, and his five enormous volumes will justly alarm you. Well, well, you will believe in me, at least, even if you do not believe my word.

My Delhi friends, with whom you ought by now to have fallen in love, took me away to a distance of two days' march from that place, where they live. I howled with the wolves with a good grace, that is, as I pursued the boar with them, I showed myself as indifferent as they were to the fate of my head and

¹ *Le Catholique*, a monthly publication edited at that time by M. le baron d'Eckstein, often contained articles on the literature and religion of the Hindus.

limbs. It so happened that I was not thrown, which is entirely due to the fact that they had given me the best Arab in our whole supply of horses. Being thrown from one's horse comes immediately after chronic inflammation of the liver and cholera-morbus in the hierarchy of things causing mortality in this country. A few broken legs, a few fractured shoulders are so much the rule in an Indian hunt that none ever takes place without a surgeon in attendance. As for lions and tigers, that is the most harmless of sports (for gentlemen, that is to say), since they are not hunted on horseback, but only from an elephant. Every huntsman is perched up like a witness in an English court of justice, in a very high box strapped on the animal's back. He has a small park of artillery at hand, comprising a pair of guns and a pair of pistols. It sometimes happens, though very rarely, that when the tiger is brought to bay it leaps on the head of the elephant; but that is nothing to do with the likes of us: it is the business of the mahout [*mohaotte*], who is paid twenty-five francs a month to put up with this sort of accident. If he is killed, he at least has the satisfaction of being thoroughly avenged, for the elephant does not calmly play the clarinet on his trunk when he feels a tiger on his head; he punishes it as thoroughly as he can, and the huntsman finishes it off with a shot at close range. The mahout, as you see, is a sort of responsible editor. There is another poor devil behind you, whose business it is to hold a parasol over your head. His state is even worse than that of the mahout; when the elephant is scared and flees from the charging tiger, as the latter leaps on its hind quarters, the true function of this man is then to be eaten instead of the gentleman. India is the Utopia of a social order run for the benefit of "nice people" (*gens comme il faut*). In Europe the poor carry the rich on their shoulders, but only metaphorically; here the metaphor disappears. Instead of workers and eaters, or governors and governed, those subtle distinctions of European politics, in India there are only the carriers and the carried, which is much clearer.

I could go on for ever in this vein, but let me return to my ego. On the 12th, the day before my departure from Delhi, a

packet arrived for me from Ludhiana [Loodianah] on the banks of the Sutlej, near Ranjit Singh's outposts. It contained a letter from Porphyre dated July 29, 1829, a note from you which is too short to count, and a letter from Victor de Tracy. The whole thing had come by a ship of war to the good Governor of Chandernagore, who spares no pains to do his best for me on all occasions. He will see that you get this through the same agency, as well as another which I have written to-day to the Jardin des Plantes.

There is a Catholic bishop in residence at Agra. Though I did not know his name, I was such a fashionable figure that I did not hesitate to write him a very polite note in Italian asking if I might have the favour of seeing him. Overcome by the more than Italian politeness of his reply, I hurried off to his palace at once. The episcopal palace is a little ruined mosque which the Government has assigned to him, and where he lives very poorly. I found him dining at noon, seated with a splendid appetite before the most slender dinner; he was, moreover, fresh, cheerful, lively and as fat as butter, with the most handsome face and the most magnificent grey beard I have ever seen. The English, who cannot believe that such a poor priest can be a bishop, content themselves with calling him *padre*, a distorted Portuguese word applied in Hindustani to every kind of Christian or Moslem priest, and the *monsignore* with which I addressed him seemed to delight him all the more because I was accompanied on my call by an Englishman. Without the slightest embarrassment or pride the good man warmly pressed us to share his dinner, and though we declined, we could not avoid at least drinking each other's health. He confessed that his wine was no good, and said that what he had in his village in Tuscany cost fifty times less and was a hundred times better. When I questioned him about the size of his diocese and flock, "*La caldaja*," he said, "*è molto grande; ma—la carne molto poca* (The pot is very big; but there is very little meat in it)". Since, as he said this, he was chasing round with his iron fork the fragments of a meagre stew lost in a huge tin platter, I found an appropriateness in his reply which

his Italian pantomime rendered still more expressive, till it made me burst out laughing. When the Englishman, who, I may add in parenthesis, was a Scotchman and a Puritan, saw the bishop laughing as heartily as I did at his metaphor, he asked: "What is the joke?" I explained, but he did not laugh, and when we had left, he said that it was not at all seemly to talk like that about Christian souls, especially for a priest.

There is no longer any chance of my meeting the Chevalier Grey in the mountains this year. He has just been making the circuit of the provinces where I am at present by palanquin, and has seen as much of the hills as was not covered with snow; but that is all he will be able to do. All this time Lady Grey has been staying by herself in Calcutta, very bored, for she has not the pastime of holding trials, as her husband has. My arrival had been announced at Agra, Muttra and Delhi by Sir Charles Grey, who had served as my herald. The Calcutta newspapers, to which Lord William allows the same liberty as in England, have given my Chief Justice a terrible drubbing for indulging his curiosity to this small extent. I was so much inclined to become "*too great an admirer of Lady G.*" that perhaps it is as well that our fine plans for November have been reduced to this excursion on the part of the Chevalier.

Towards April I shall be at Hardwar, a little town on the banks of the Ganges where it issues from the mountains. At that date a famous fair is held there annually, at which I shall see Chinamen, Tibetans, Tartars, Kashmiris, Uzbegs, Afghans, Persians, etc. I shall buy some warm clothes there for myself and my servants, see three or four people whom I want to see, and, as a little luxury, visit the Begum Sumru, who made war on the Mahrattas more than sixty years ago with the finest cavalry in India in those days. Nobody quite knows where she came from, but she is generally held to have been a slave brought from Persia or Georgia. I need not regret not seeing her principality of Sirdhana, where I should have gone purely on her account. The resident at Delhi has given me letters to her. She was married some sixty years ago to an Italian adventurer in the service of Shah Alam, and since then

passes for a Christian and a Catholic, I do not know why. Might she not be a good match for me, if I inherited her principality? I will think it over between here and Hardwar.

I shall enter the Himalayas by the Dun [Dhoon] valley above Hardwar and Saharanpur, the chief town in which is Dehra [Dheira]. A certain Major Young reigns there under the title of assistant resident of Delhi and commandant of the hill militia. From thence I shall go to Sabathu, the chief town of a similar district, for which I also bear with me innumerable letters to the chief official, two of which are letters of credit. From Sabathu I shall ascend to Kotgarh [Kotgerk], on the second step of the Himalayas, as it were, near the Sutlej; and from thence, either by way of a path overhanging the precipitous banks of this river, or else over a pass which leads across the eternal snows of the central range, I shall cross to the other side of this range into a little region known as Kanawar, which is independent of China politically, but belongs to Tibet both by its geographical position to the north of the Himalayas and by its climate.

Owing to these conditions its products must be more or less the same as those of Tibet, and for the most part unknown, even if there is little variety in them, which its hyperborean winters render probable. Captain Herbert, who discovered the route leading to this region in 1819, is the only educated man who has visited it. He merely surveyed it as a geographer, with a repeating circle and a chronometer. Since then a few curious travellers have been there with no particular object and built two houses there, one of which I hope to occupy. If somebody has arrived and taken possession of them before me for this year, I shall build myself a hut or shack, or come to terms with a villager for the hire of his. Such, dear father, will be my home for four months, I expect. I shall be living some nine or ten thousand feet above sea-level in a country where the summers will be like those of Hungary and the winters like those of Lapland. The nights, however, will always be cold. My horizon will be closed on all sides by snow mountains. The principality of Kanawar is independent of the English, but I shall enjoy the same security in these mountains

as in Delhi or Calcutta. The last representative of English authority resides at Kotgarh. All my letters will be sent on to me there, and the commandant at Kotgarh will have them sent on by fast runner to Kanawar.

Till I go off to freeze at these heights, the spring, which is just arriving, is baking me in the plains. It is most lucky that I am taking my Delhi friends' camp with me as far as Kaithal. They have enormous double or quadruple tents, which I send on before me to wait at intervals along the road, so that when I arrive at the halting-place at ten or eleven in the morning, I find shelter. I must leave you (it is ten o'clock) to go to bed in mine, from which I am writing to you; it will be taken down—the work of an instant—resolved into its component parts, rolled up and loaded on the back of one of the camels, and will go on ahead at midnight; since I do not start till four in the morning I shall find it already up when I arrive to-morrow. Good-night; the wind is blowing hard. Oh, what a fine thing a house is! If you only knew how unpleasant it is to be caught in one's bed, like a fish in a net, under a tent that has blown down! Adieu.

March 22

Closed at Kaithal, in Sikh territory.

II

(C.F. XXVI)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Camp at Kursil [Cursali], at the head of the valley of the Jamna, below its sources, 2615 metres above the level of Calcutta, May 15, 1830

It is a very long time since I wrote to you, my dear old fellow; yet I can hardly believe my letter-book, which is silent about you since "Chandernagore, November 21, 1829, a long letter to Porphyre". If I really have not written to you since then, I have

often thought of you; you have so often borne me company in my solitude that I really have the illusion of having been the most faithful of correspondents. My last letter to our father, No. 10, written from Delhi, travelled with me as far as Kaithal, in the territory of the independent Sikhs, north-west of the English possessions, till March 22, when it set off for Delhi and thence for Calcutta, starting its long and adventurous journey in the wallet of a Sikh horseman specially despatched as an express messenger.

The day after that I mounted my horse at sunrise in company with the friendly people with whose good fortune my own meagre one happened to be bound up for a fortnight, and we galloped hard for three days—hard enough to tire out the horses. It goes without saying that, in spite of its humble appearance, my faithful Persian nag arrived in fresher condition than my companions' superb Arabs, each of which had cost five or six thousand francs. We came to another set of tents pitched in readiness, and found the Rajah of Patiala's seventeen elephants and four hundred horsemen drawn up in battle array before our camp. A simple and elegant luncheon, served on our arrival without the omission of a single superfluous fork, was rapidly despatched, and immediately afterwards each of us mounted his elephant. I was politely allotted the Rajah's own, with his royal chair of velvet and tinsel. We stationed ourselves in the middle of the line in which all these beasts were drawn up, most of them with nobody on their backs, or else bearing the ministers (*vakils*) of the neighbouring rajahs, deputed to wait upon our young friend the assistant resident of Delhi. Our cavalry was deployed on the flanks of this imposing line, and, with the Rajah's two drummers rolling out the royal march before us, we entered the desert.

It consists of vast sandy salt plains covered with stunted thorny shrubs and scattered here and there with tall trees; in other parts there are grassy steppes. It presents no obstacles to the elephants, which laboriously uproot trees between which they cannot pass and tear off branches which might touch their rider. Our cavalry was sometimes checked by the forests and had to fall back, following us through the broad clearing which we had opened up.

Wherever it was able to move freely, it formed a semicircle on either flank, beating the whole country for a great way round and driving all the game on the plains in front of the elephants. The six of us killed hundreds of hares and partridges. A hyaena and several wild boar that passed within range of our guns were wounded—or what a hunter calls wounded—though our horsemen, sent in pursuit, failed to catch them. We saw herds of antelope and nilgai, but were unable to get near enough to hit them with our carbines. As for lions, there was not so much as the shadow of a single one. Still, we hoped for the morrow, and returned to our camp at nightfall. I was enchanted with the strangeness of this novel scene. I had seen more of the Orient in that one day than during the whole year since my arrival in India.

On our return we had a bath and dressed: the bath was a goat-skin full of cold water emptied over you by a servant, who squirts it hard at your chest and shoulders. We put on the lightest of cotton clothes and then came dinner in an enormous tent, illuminated like a ballroom. Bottles fell before us as hares and partridges had done during the day. At either celebration I was the only unworthy person; however, I did my best. Water was prohibited and banned; the ones with weak heads drank claret instead, which does not count as wine. Even champagne is regarded as no more than a pleasant mean between water and wine, the latter name being reserved for the wines of Spain and Portugal. The solid part of the dinner equalled the liquid in choiceness and perfection. And that nothing should be wanting to the evening's entertainment, which lasted till midnight, some Persian mimes came in with the dessert, whose outrageous costumes forced us to leave the table and throw ourselves flat on the carpet so as to laugh with less danger. When these had been dismissed some dancing-girls made their entrance, alternately singing and dancing. Nothing could be more monotonous than their dancing, unless it is their singing. This is not lacking in art, and they say that the vocal outbursts which interrupt the faint, plaintive, almost indistinguishable murmur at intervals are peculiarly pleasing to those who have forgotten the measure and melody of European music. I am not

Indian enough for that yet; but in my eyes their dancing is already the most graceful and seductive in the world. The *entrechats* and *pirouettes* of the Opera seem to me to resemble the caperings of savages in the South Seas and the stupid stamping of negroes; it is in the north of Hindustan, however, that these nautch-girls are most celebrated.

On the following day at five o'clock, as on the previous day, the butler woke me with a great cup of clear Mocha coffee, boiling hot, specially prepared for "our friend the Frenchman". My English friends were already waiting for me on horseback, having drunk their own cup of tea. We galloped on for ten leagues and, as on the previous day, found everything and everybody ready on our arrival. During the night our elephants had carried on the other set of tents, the other kitchen equipment, etc., etc. Our whole camp had travelled during the cool of the day and, having rested and breakfasted well, we found everything drawn up in battle array, as on the day before. We hunted all day in the same style, and on the following day as well, and so it went on for about a week. At last, when we had beaten every clump of bushes in the countryside, exhausted and ruined the few villages scattered about it, and worn out the Sikh horsemen, we returned to camp, bringing with us only a troop of horsemen and all the elephants, which were to take part in the tiger-hunt nearer the foot of the mountains. This merry and magnificent band accompanied me as far as Saharanpur, a little town where the Government keeps up a miserable Botanical Garden. The director, who is also doctor to the station, was very helpful to me. I prepared my new outfit while staying with him, left my heavy baggage in his care with the collections I had made since leaving Delhi, and, taking with me only what was strictly necessary, I bade farewell to the plains on April 12, two days after the breaking of the monsoon, when the prevailing winds were from the south-west and the temperature was 35 degrees by day (95° F.) and 33 (90° F.) or 34 (92° F.) at night. I ascended with my carts and oxen as far as Dehra Dun, where I dismissed them. I sent back my poor "*poney*" to my botanist's stable at Saharanpur (the English have five or six

excellent, polite words as compared with our one low expression *bidet*, which I can no longer bring myself to apply to my mount). In his stead I equipped myself with a long, sturdy bamboo stick, and, having first made a thorough examination of the first step in which the mountains rise staircase-like from the plains, while basket- and harness-makers and all sorts of workmen were in my camp making ready for my journey to places where none but men can pass, I climbed up to the second step on April 24. Never has a traveller been seen there with such a simple equipment. Thirty-five porters at a cost of nearly four hundred francs a month suffice for me; but I have succeeded in reducing the number of my personal servants to five, even including a gardener. Besides this I have an escort of five Gurkha soldiers commanded by a picked *havildar*, who manages to keep my men up to their work wonderfully. So I myself make the forty-sixth. You will consider this a royal suite. Yet I have a very bad dinner daily and am lucky that it has never failed so far: some boiled rice, a tough, tasteless piece of kid, and water from the neighbouring torrent. I only drink brandy at daybreak to warm myself up; a few drops are sufficient. I sleep on a very hard bed without any mattress. My tent is very light: the freezing wind which swoops down at night from the snowy peaks pierces right through it, blows under it in gusts, and freezes me through my clothes and blankets. The very day after I had reached that altitude storms so violent and incessant as to be absolutely unprecedented in the hills at this time of year descended upon me. Nor is this run of bad luck exhausted yet: every day brings its little storm of hail and rain at noon. At Dehra the tree beneath which my little tent had been pitched was shattered by lightning. Two of my men were inside with me, and for a few moments both of them were paralysed down the left side. On the heights of Mussoorie, which dominate the valley of Dehra, the ground about me was strewn with splinters of a rock that was struck by lightning as I was eating my anxious and frugal meal, dejected and paralysed with cold and damp. It really looks as though the powers above were aiming at me. The first two blows did not touch me; but look out for the third!

The influence of altitude on climate and products here entirely neutralizes that of the latitude, which is 31 degrees. I am camping beneath a wood of wild apricot-trees, which are only just beginning to put forth their leaves. The floor of my tent is literally covered with flowers. They are wild strawberry-plants, which are to be found in the grass here everywhere. The wind bears towards me the smoke of the great fire round which my hill-men are sleeping, or rather dozing; it is pleasantly scented, for they are burning a cedar or a pine-tree. Most of our forest-trees, or kinds so closely akin to them that none but a botanist can distinguish between them, predominate in the central Himalayan zone, mingled with a few others strange to us, but having their representatives on the plains of North America.

I have certainly got more short-sighted during the last year. I never take off my spectacles except to read or write, and even with spectacles I do not see far enough to fire my carbine. The range of my gun is simply that of my eyes. I have therefore left my carbine at Saharanpur. You must give my compliments to your friend at St. Etienne; his arms are excellent.

But when I take stock of myself, that is the only thing of which I feel the lack. A year spent in the plains has not impaired my constitution. I find my legs have become as good in the hills as they were in the Alps. I suffer from the cold here, just as I was sometimes inconvenienced by the heat there; but these opposite extremes affect nothing but my temper and do not injure my health. I am never without my insurance policy against cholera, dysentery and jungle fever (the three great diseases of India), but I do not reckon to open it till I get back to Paris, and feel sure I shall never be forced to get it out before: it is a little box containing drastic remedies for dealing with an attack, with some excellent instructions, a little treatise on their use, kindly written out for me by the cleverest doctor in Calcutta. When I remember his courtesy I cannot but go back in mind over the unceasing succession of kindnesses and gratifying politenesses with which I have never failed to meet since my arrival in this country. I have often been almost touched by their genuine cordiality. In

this respect nothing has been lacking; old and young, great and small, overwhelm me with kindness. The curious thing is that my good luck has never failed even among "*fashionables*". Though I have just travelled from seven to eight hundred leagues on horseback without either whip or spurs, the officers of the most "*dashing*" (that is, brilliant, extravagant) regiment in the English army, in which a major pays down two hundred and forty thousand francs to become a lieutenant-colonel, etc., etc., are like brothers to me; and when I come down from the hills again in October or November, I shall find relays of horses left by their courtesy in readiness to take me in a single day's hard riding from Saharanpur to Meerut [Mirout], seven days' march away—that is, fifty leagues through country entirely devoid of interest.

It is late; I must say good-night, old fellow! Good-night and adieu for some time to come. To-morrow I am to climb up as far as the sources of the Jamna, which are, I think, two thousand metres above this spot, the last inhabited place in the valley. That makes six thousand feet or twelve thousand steps up a staircase a hundred and fifty times higher than ours. Farewell, then, farewell.

Camp at Ranna, May 20

I am still beneath apricot-trees, old man, but two days' march higher than my last stopping-place, and though the altitude of this one is still over two thousand metres, all the same, the sun is very hot at this time of day, when I arrive worn out with fatigue and upset by the change of diet forced upon me by necessity in the high mountains. For six months past the foundation of my breakfast (if my meagre morning meal deserves that fine name) and of my dinner has been rice, but here there is nothing but wheat and barley. I thought I was well provided with my customary oatmeal, and, since I am not very anxious to poke my nose into my cook's haunt of iniquity (I mean my basket of provisions), I took the fool at his word: the next thing was that a shortage of rice was announced. But by violating the domestic privacy of the few people living in this high valley,

my Gurkha *havildar*, my lieutenant-general, found a few baskets of potatoes. A fine feast ensued, though I ate them salted, as Bonaparte did artichokes. If you remember your Paul-Louis Courier well, you will recall that the man who was not yet known as the Duke of—I forget what it was—exclaimed: “Oh, great man! admirable in everything!” But though I am such a great personage here, nobody paid me any such compliment, and the change from dried to fresh food has had the disastrous effects upon me which you experienced some eighteen years ago on the banks of the Niemen, when you prudently went on foot, leading your horse by the bridle.

However, the weather was magnificent, and at the foot of the high peaks where I was camping this was too precious a circumstance not to take immediate advantage of it. I made two ascents with a day’s rest in between; on the first day I was forced by the superstition and, above all, the stupid cowardice of my men to stop far short of the point I had intended to reach; and my second expedition would have failed of its object for the same reasons had I not supplemented the promises by which I encouraged them to follow me by threats of a thrashing for those who refused to go on. One of them, my gardener, the dullest and most timorous of Hindus, remained faithful to me. The rest of the band, squatting in the sun on a rock which stuck up through the carpet of snow on which we had been walking for two hours past, was in a state of absolute mutiny and kept shouting to my poor gardener. I did not wait for his fidelity to waver, and, though it takes some effort to climb even a few hundred feet on soft snow above a certain altitude, where the rarity of the air makes one breathe very fast and with difficulty and leaves one exhausted at every thirty steps, I sacrificed the distance by which I had preceded them, and, slightly bending my knees and bracing myself with both hands against my long, sturdy bamboo pole, while throwing my body backwards so as to put the brake on my speed, if necessary, when I drove the pole further into the snow, I propelled myself like a stone straight at the rock of revolt, where the bamboo pole served a fresh purpose. The

traitor whose voice I had recognized when he shouted to my gardener paid for all the rest, and paid dearly too. The slightest weakness on my part, any half-measure, would have been most dangerous, for the culprit was the most agile, the strongest and usually the most disaffected of all; so I forthwith dealt so faithfully with his shoulders that, even had he wanted to do so, he could not have made any reply. Since, in spite of their hard and humble way of living, these poor devils belong to a high and essentially military caste, I really did not know how the others would take this lesson. But Rajputs and hill-men though they were, they took it like regular Hindus, that is to say, clasping their hands and begging for mercy. When the one I had beaten had recovered from his astonishment, he placed himself at the head of the file, taking the end of a long rope which all the others grasped like a hand-rail, for fear there might be crevasses beneath the snow, and, roped in like fashion to my botanical aide-de-camp, I walked on the flank of the column like a regular sheep-dog—a hard job in such a spot as that—exhausting all the flowers of my Hindustani rhetoric in order to rally their drooping spirits. But for the snow, there is not one of these men who could not go three times farther than I could in the same time along the most abominable mountain paths, though carrying a weight of a hundred pounds; but these snowy wastes are a thing to which they are unaccustomed. When they leave the paths, to which they are so well used that custom entirely hides the often fatal danger of a false step, the animal instinct which guides them fails them on these snowy slopes, which call for neither skill nor courage, for the danger from a fall is negligible. I often fell down, and got off with nothing worse than having to shake my clothes. I wanted to determine the altitude at which all vegetation ceases, and I succeeded in seeing it on the verge of doing so. But the delays that impeded my march, added to its extreme slowness, forced me to think about returning before I had reached the last ridges of rock which rise above the snows, and probably mark the limit of the zone of vegetation. On my way back from the region of Kanawar I cannot fail to find such

an opportunity; but I should have liked to determine this point in various parts of the central Himalayan range.

Do not be too hard on my deeds of violence against the men in my team. No intermediate position is possible between those of hammer and anvil, between contempt and servile respect. *You* do not thrash people who fail to call you "Your Lordship, Your Highness, Your Majesty"; but in India it is the rule that the natives must use no other titles (the ones they use towards their rajahs and nawabs or the Emperor at Delhi) in addressing the least of English gentlemen. This very morning on the road a surly fellow addressed me as "you" instead of "Your Highness", and I had to give him a very sharp lesson in manners, in which I was fully within my rights, just as a Parisian philanthropist would be if he boxed the ears of a boor who addressed him by the familiar "thou". I have to be all the more jealous of etiquette because the simplicity of my outfit, the hard life I lead, the privations and fatigue which I endure in common with my men, my clothes made of cheap stuff, all of which are appropriate to this sort of existence—in fact, everything about me and on me—encourages them to neglect it. And so I am not content with "my lord"; I have to be called "Your Majesty", or at the very least "Your Highness".

You would certainly laugh at His Majesty if you were to appear before him, dressed as he is like a polar bear, and with a long moustache, an adornment which greatly impresses the almost beardless men of the Himalaya. Fortunately I have no mirror to settle the question, so I persuade myself that the ruddy glow which I perceive beneath my nose when I look downwards is merely the effect of a mirage.

In more than one unfortunate particular, my dear Porphyre, my small misfortunes follow your miseries on the Moscow campaign at a respectful distance. The horrible filthiness of the hill-men, against which I can find no protection, is one of the ills to which I have the greatest difficulty in resigning myself; I hope I shall not grow accustomed to it. . . . A storm has just come up and tempered the heat. An experiment which I have

made in military therapeutics has been a perfect success. A boiling-hot infusion of teapot, for lack of tea, sweetened with an equal part of brandy, has set me on my feet again. I have been brought a kid which will at last vary my brahminical diet. To use the style of *Le Constitutionnel*: the clouds which have shrouded, etc., etc., are lifting, and I perceive the dawn of a fiery curry, that is, one made with red pepper, which would be absolutely uneatable to a Parisian and is a trifle hot even for me, but will complete the process of restoring my normal functions, which but for that would have been quite upset.

And this (*honi soit qui mal y pense*) reminds me of a pharmaceutical episode (in this modest country, I hardly know what to call it) during my journey among the Sikhs. One morning I woke up amid cries of "Stop, thief!" Day was hardly dawning after a dark night. Servants, foot- and horse-soldiers at once started off at a run. A thief had slipped into my tent, which is very small, by cutting a broad entrance with his sabre, creeping under my bed, which is very low, and stealing things at random from among those which strewed the ground on all sides. My pistols and watch were practically in his path; but he was probably disturbed in his operations by some noise or false alarm, and, having no time to pick and choose, made off with what he had in his hand, my powder-flask and shaving-kit. Then, being disturbed in his flight, he threw away the less precious portions of his booty, the razor-strop, the shaving-soap, a bottle of nitric acid, etc. These objects, which were scattered along the road to the neighbouring village, were brought back to me. . . . Plenipotentiaries sent by the rajahs at once appeared and asked for a description of the objects stolen and their value, so that they might have a search made for them everywhere and, in case of non-success, compensate me at the expense of the freeholders of the place. Since they did not quite understand my description of the article which I regretted most, I explained matters by drawing it in its natural size, and was preparing to make copies of this description for distribution among the inquisitors, when, hearing the noise, my English friends came up. My drawing threw them into consternation; they blushed to

the roots of their hair and sincerely deprecated the fact that, being unfortunately in the habit of using such a thing, I did not take more care to keep it a secret. I told them gravely that it might be a matter of life or death to me. "Ah, death a thousand times rather than such an object as that!" they exclaimed in chorus. "Nay!" I replied. "A thousand such objects rather than one headache!" And I thereupon pronounced a serious and well-reasoned eulogy upon this excellent appliance and a doctor's satire upon calomel, jalap and co., which the English have the folly to regard as its virtuous equivalents. My "*speech*", my harangue, was no doubt eloquent; for they at once wrote to the rajah in person, requesting him to have every hut in his wretched empire searched and every bush beaten in order to recover the stolen object, and if they succeeded in recovering it, to send it me under a good escort to any place where I might happen to be. I do not despair of seeing a detachment of Sikh cavalry bring it me in Paris in a few years' time on a velvet cushion. In the meantime my English friends, having seen reason, were polite enough to vanquish their scruples and send messengers to the heads of the neighbouring military hospitals in search of one to take its place; and they succeeded in procuring me one which I assume to be of venerable antiquity and the first attempt at such a thing ever made. Father will laugh at it and so will you. The reports of this accident have gained me the most consummate reputation, not exactly for immorality, but for free-thinking verging upon cynicism. Adieu, dear Porphyre; I was quite sad when I sat down to write to you, exhausted and ill, and lo! punch and this chat with you have revived me and almost cheered me up. I must leave you and duly celebrate the courtesy of my above-mentioned English friends. In these remote parts I feel the inestimable value of health and take as much care of mine as circumstances allow. Set your mind at rest about my prudence, moderation and adroitness, and trust to my good fortune, too (for there is more in it than merely playing my cards skilfully), to bring me back to you one day without a hair injured. Adieu!

Camp in a forest below the summits of
Kedar-Kanta, 3200 metres above sea-
level, evening of May 27

You are a sort of whipping-boy of mine, my poor fellow, for it is you who hear all my complaints. I felt well enough to start out on the march again, trusting that a return to my ordinary diet would soon complete my recovery; and arriving at the head of the valley of the Budiar yesterday, I left its highest dwellings behind me this morning and have camped in these solitudes, intending to climb the neighbouring heights to-morrow and cross over them into a valley running parallel with this one. I arrived worn out with fatigue after a march of only seven hours. However, I had collected ample material to work upon and set to work without delay. But all of a sudden I was seized with such acute pains in the abdomen that they made me almost delirious. The nearest inhabited dwellings are either seven hours' march behind or two days' march ahead, and my men have only just enough provisions for the intervening time, so I am bound to go on or go back; and what should I find if I did? This is the wrong side of the medal. On the healthy side it is splendid, but on the sick side it is very ugly. Besides, no woman could stand acute pain better than I do. I hardly know what it is, except for a few rare attacks of cramp, a touch of fever eight years ago and my violent pains of to-day; and my idea has always been to make an end of things, so as to get rid of the pain at once. I am dieting myself rigorously. What the state of my legs will be like to-morrow I do not know. But I mean to sleep on it. Night has fallen. Adieu, then; it is so cold and damp in my tent that I will prudently leave you and interpose my blankets between its atmosphere and myself. Perhaps those rogues of Sikhs are the cause of my sufferings. Good-night. Oh, how lucky you are to live in a house!

Camp at Ajalta, June 4

I am alive, and very much alive, I assure you! If I were paid at the rate of six thousand francs to do so (would to God that I were!), I would explain to you most satisfactorily how I have

recovered my health after being so ill through the influence of air and water; but the fact remains that, without having rested for a single whole day, here I am, with my legs in better condition than those of anyone in my caravan. This is very necessary, for there is not a single day when I do not have to go up or down twelve or fifteen hundred metres, not to speak of incidental excursions. I have substituted milk for water as my beverage and drink two bottles at my dinner in the evening without turning a hair. It is a sort of antidote to the blazing sauce of my eternal curry, a regular essence of fire. This costs me three sous a day extra and a little high-handedness. I send men to fetch the cows from the mountain (note that to-day I am camping at an altitude of two thousand three hundred metres, yesterday at two thousand six hundred metres, and so on), and they milk a dozen before the door of my tent in order to obtain this poor quantity of milk. I pay a magnificent price for it—three sous, as I said, which is half as much again as it is worth—but they have to be quick, and the arrival of the milk has to synchronize with the last touch given to my dinner by the cook. Nothing, indeed, is so easy as high-handedness when one has only to say, like M. de Foucauld: "*Empoigne!*" (Collar him!). I emulate him, using a wonderful word in the Hindustani jargon, before which "Collar him!" pales to insignificance. "*Pakaro!*" [*Puccarau!*] I say, and my Gurkhas would collar the devil himself and M. de Foucauld with him. Besides, in this country the people make it almost a point of honour to be collared. Those whom you require never stir from their houses unless you send a soldier to fetch them in due form. What a useful thing it is to be arbitrary! But what a wretched country where it is necessary! I cannot think of our own country without a feeling of admiration and affection.

Simla, June 22, 1830

I have just fired such a broadside of manuscript at Father that, unless I abandon the subject of myself, I find I have come to the end of my news. But since I have already said the essential things, just let me amuse myself: I was dismal enough in the preceding pages.

So you are going in for Afghans too, Porphyre! And not content with that, you are taking an interest in the inhabitants of Kabul and Kandahar and other frauds of the sort invented by Messrs. of the *Courrier* and Co. Ah! Nobody is a prophet in his own country!

Those two heroes, the brothers Mohammed Khan and Purdil Khan, make no more stir at Delhi than the Duke of Saxe-Schwerin or Anhalt-Koethen, who may be very great princes too, but only incognito.

Know, then, that the Company's army consists of three hundred thousand men, thirty thousand of them being the King's English troops, and seven or eight thousand belonging to entirely European corps in the service of the Company, including the whole of the artillery; that in point of fact the native army, led by numbers of European officers and non-commissioned officers, is disciplined and trained very much like the King's army and fights very much like it under the command of its officers, in whom it has the greatest and most justifiable confidence; that in a country like this, interspersed with deserts and in which even the richest provinces—with the exception of Bengal, which is a very, very long way from Erzerum—could not feed the smallest army, any body of troops that is to escape dying of starvation, and often thirst, too, has to drag about after it a vast number of elephants, camels and waggons; that the Company possesses three thousand elephants, forty thousand camels and supplies of every kind in proportion; that it is always ready to start a campaign, in fact; and ask yourself whether from this place, Simla, seven leagues from Ranjit Singh, I have not the right to laugh at him as much as I like, in spite of all, and at all Afghans and men of Kandahar and Kabul too, as well as those heroes the brothers Mohammed and Purdil, and, in short, every sort of beggar, brigand and rogue, whether on foot or on horseback, who may flourish on the right bank of the Indus.

If you can find a polite and inoffensive way of conveying such advice to them, tell the gentlemen of the *Courrier* not to be so ready to believe in heroes, a species of animal rarer in this country

than anywhere else, and, as a rule, an exotic everywhere.

If I had more money, I should go to Kashmir, which belongs to Ranjit Singh. The resident at Delhi, whom I should ask to give me a passport to him, would write to him on the spot to this effect and immediately receive the desired firman. Perhaps I ought not to regret that pecuniary prudence forbids me such an interesting journey, for Ranjit Singh may die any day. He is not young and on the day he dies there will be fighting between his two sons, so that a poor, peaceable naturalist would be sure of being robbed, if nothing worse. How can I put it? The Sikhs are exactly like Turks in this respect!

M. Allard is like a sort of Soliman Bey to Ranjit Singh. From time to time he comes to Ludhiana (on the banks of the Sutlej) to visit the English officers stationed there outside the Company's territories, among the independent Sikhs on the territory of my friend the Rajah of Patiala, who has not yet returned me my syringe. He is well paid (a hundred thousand francs, as much as a general on this side of the river), but is almost a prisoner. Ranjit Singh takes good care that he shall spend the whole of his pay every year, so as to remove any desire he may have to leave. He follows the same policy with his other European officers, whom he trusts only partly. A certain M. Mevius, a Prussian in command of one of his regiments of cavalry, having provoked a revolt in this corps recently by applying the German procedure of flogging to his Sikhs, was forced to flee to the very tent of the King (Ranjit Singh) to escape his men's fury. Ranjit saved his life but refused to retain him in his service: some bitter things were said on both sides in this connexion, and in finally dismissing him Ranjit said with an oath: "Germans, French or English, the —s are all alike".

I ought to have left an enormous blank space for the oath, which is very short, but so vigorous in Hindustani that it would take a whole line to express anything equivalent to it in French.

It is all to the interest of the English that Ranjit should be master in his own territory. Before his power was firmly established, bodies of cavalry were constantly crossing the Sutlej and

pillaging the independent Sikhs on the left bank, who are friendly to the Company and under its protection. These had to be helped, and no satisfaction or reparation could be obtained short of putting the aggressors to flight and pursuing them across the river, for the petty princes in the Punjab were too weak to be held responsible for the brigandage of their subjects. If such a thing were to happen now, the political resident at Delhi would send Ranjit a detailed bill, in order to recover the value of the crops and herds that had been looted immediately, and a generous proportion of the culprits with them, to be hanged in style. Ranjit would not care much about the hanging, but the rupees he would have to pay would cause him intense chagrin, and he sees to it that nothing of the sort ever happens. Since his authority has been firmly established such things have been unheard of.

Though my host ¹ happens to be the political agent who exercises control over the only Tartar and Tibetan states over which the English power extends, we have heard nothing about any unknown scholar travelling through Tibet with an escort of twelve hundred mounted Cossacks, or other low fellows of the same sort.² The twelve hundred horses of these twelve hundred Cossacks would run great risk of dying of starvation in that part of Tibet which extends as far as the foot of the Himalayas on the other side, towards the north. I am not entirely free from anxiety about how I am to feed the one nag in which I expect to indulge in Kanawar.

My gunner with his thousand Gurkha infantrymen is such absolute master of these mountains that since his accession to power he has not once been obliged to resort to force. He deposes the kings of these regions when they slay too many of their subjects, imprisons or fines them. It only costs him a word to the resident at Delhi, under whose orders he is in political matters. The Hindu-Tartar Rajah of Bashahr [Bissahir] takes good care to inform him of all that goes on beyond the mountains where he

¹ Charles Pratt Kennedy.

² Jacquemont is here contradicting an article in a French newspaper about which his brother had questioned him.

lives, and I have good reason to believe that the learned man in question, with his twelve hundred Cossacks, has probably come to a full stop some months' march away from this frontier.

You seem to be fairly easy in your mind about the Afghans, and you start with a most amusing observation about *pâtés*, to which I am happy to be able to reply that I have a prospect of eating a Strasbourg *pâté de foie gras* here in four months' time, as well as a Périgord one, a kind which, at their best, are in no way inferior to a *pâté* of woodcock from Boulogne. The Bordeaux boats bring some to Calcutta every year, which arrive there as fresh as they do in Paris, and your fellow-gunner, who is at present my host, has just written to the capital with the object of regaling me with both sorts when next we meet. And since we are on the subject of *pâtés*, I may tell you that on the mountains above Mussoorie, when I first entered the Himalayas, another gunner, this one's general, an old white-haired bachelor whom you would simply delight in if you knew him, gave me a taste—taste, do I say! I simply devoured it!—of a truffled *pâté* of hare and a series of truffled red-legged partridges from Périgord. The way they both do it is perfectly simple. One has a salary of a hundred thousand francs by virtue of his rank in the army, the other by virtue of his post, which shortens distances remarkably and acts as a suction-pump to all good things from Europe, raising them to an altitude of seven and eight thousand feet above sea-level. Why are you not the artillery captain with the *pâté de foie gras*! In your absence know at least, old fellow, that the perfidious islander who belongs to the same profession as yourself drank your health with me yesterday, and—do not tell Father or Taschereau—it was not in wine from Tours.

June 25

I close this packet with the announcement that the day after to-morrow I am starting for Kanawar.

12

(C.F. XXVII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Simla, Simlah, Semlah, Semla,
whichever you like, June 21, 1830

The last letters I wrote you were sent off, one from Benares, which is noted in my memorandum book as enormous; and the last of all, started in Delhi and closed at Kaithal in the Sikh territory, on March 22. Under the same cover as this Porphyre will receive a sort of diary of my progress from Kaithal to the central Himalayas, which more or less excuses me from saying anything to you on that subject.

This place is like Mont d'Or or Bagnères, the resort of the very rich, the leisured and the sick. Nine years ago the officer in charge of the military, political, judicial and financial services of this extremity of the English empire, which was acquired only fifteen years ago, took it into his head to desert his palace on the plains during the hot weather, which was terrible one year, and come up and camp here under the shade of the cedars. He was alone in a lonely spot and his friends came to visit him there. The site, the climate, everything, in fact, seemed excellent to them. They sent for a few hundred hill-men, who felled trees all round this spot, rough-hewed them, and in a month's time, with the aid of workmen from the plains, built a spacious house. Each of the guests wanted one like it; there are now more than sixty of them scattered about the mountain-tops or on their slopes. A considerable village has sprung up as though by enchantment in the midst of the space occupied by them; magnificent roads have been hewn in the rock, the luxury of the Indian capital has been established seven hundred leagues from Calcutta and seven thousand feet above sea-level, and fashion reigns like a tyrant.

Porphyre might well envy my host. He is an artillery captain of his own age and seniority, but with a hundred thousand francs' pay.

He is in command of a regiment of mountain *chasseurs*, the best corps in the whole army.

He discharges the functions of collector. With an independence equal to that of the Grand Turk he acts as judge over his own subjects and, what is more, those of the neighbouring rajahs, Hindu, Tartar and Tibetan, sending them to prison, fining them, and even hanging them when he thinks fit.

This man, the first among all artillery captains in the world, is a nice fellow one hour of whose time after breakfast is occupied by the duties of his virtually royal state, and who spends the rest of his time showering marks of friendship upon me. He had been expecting me for a month, mutual friends having written and told him of my plan of visiting Simla. He has the reputation of being the most rigorous of dandies and the greatest of sticklers for form, and of having the most "stinking" pride of any of the princes of the earth. But he shows me none of this: nobody could be more of a good fellow. In the morning we go for an hour or two's gallop along the magnificent roads which he has had made, often joining some fashionable party in which I find some of my acquaintances from Calcutta. On our return there is a choice and elegant breakfast, after which my whole time and that of my host is fully and freely at my disposal if it suits me to requisition him for the purpose of seeing things or people. At sunset fresh horses are at the door and we ride round again picking up the pleasantest and gayest of the rich, leisured people or alleged invalids whom we meet. They are people of the same kind as my host, bachelors and soldiers, but soldiers employed in every kind of department; from my point of view the most interesting people in the whole of India. We sit down at half-past seven to a magnificent dinner and rise from table at eleven o'clock. I drink Rhine wine or claret or nothing but champagne, with Malmsey at dessert, while under pretext of the cold climate the others stick to port, Madeira and sherry; I do not remember drinking any water for a week. There is

never any excess, however, but great gaiety every evening. I cannot tell you how charming it seems to me after the dryness, tastelessness, hardness and brevity of my solitary dinners for the last two months among the mountains. And not only have I arrears to make up, but I have also the prospect of four months of equal misery on the other side of the Himalayas in the near future. So I am taking my revenge in advance. I arrived here so absolutely worn out with fatigue and the after-effects of an indisposition which I could not shake off, that I thought of profiting by my stay here to take some medicine; but my host's cook would have cured me in twenty-four hours.

Don't you see Simla on your map? A little to the north of the thirty-first parallel of latitude and a little to the east of the seventy-seventh meridian of longitude, a few leagues from the Sutlej? Isn't it strange to dine in silk stockings in such a place, to drink a bottle of Rhine wine and another of champagne every evening, to have delicious Mocha coffee and receive the Calcutta papers every morning?

The vizier of the Rajah of Bashahr, who is my host's most important ally, happens to be here, and Captain Kennedy (for that is my gunner's name) introduced us to each other, so I am sure of meeting with every kind of polite attention from the Rajah on the other side of the Himalayas. One of his officers will follow me everywhere and I shall take with me a couple of Gurkha carabineers from here, the smartest and handiest in my host's regiment, and one of his *chaprassis* (a sort of messenger or janissary), who has already visited those parts with his master a few years ago.

The people on this side of the mountains are horribly afraid of their neighbours on the opposite slopes. It is not easy to obtain porters for the baggage and it would be impossible to induce a single servant to follow one there by constitutional means; but Captain Kennedy obligingly offered to put any of mine who might refuse to accompany me in prison, and though they protest that they had rather be hanged on this side of the mountains than go free in Kanawar, yet by taking advantage of my host's obliging

offer in the case of one or two of them, I reckon that I shall easily be able to force the rest to make up their minds to march. I do not know what it is the fools are afraid of, but it is no longer India on the other side. There are no more castes; instead of Brahmins there are lamas. . . . However, in my train at least they will be perfectly safe. The Rajah of Bashahr knows quite well that if any harm were to come to me he would suffer for it, and he will take great care of the "*Francis sahib Captânne Kindy sahebké doste*",¹ which means "the French gentleman who is the friend of the great general Kennedy".

June 22

Yesterday was the solstice, and the seasonal rains which this time of year brings with it are sweeping all over the southern slopes of the Himalayas, in spite of their distance from the tropic. It is now some days since this tiresome change in the weather took place; I can hardly see to write, so dense are the damp clouds in which we are shrouded. Yet I shall have to march for a fortnight before reaching the Tibetan valleys where it never rains. This will be the hardest part of my journey.

A few lines in reply to your two letters. I cannot help smiling at the fear caused you by the news of an insurrection of the Company's troops at the time of my arrival in India. What can you have thought when you read in the English papers about the business of the "*half-batta*"! You must have believed that the army was in open revolt, and that Lord Bentinck had been forced to sail for Europe with his Council, while the natives, profiting by the dissensions among the Europeans, were taking up arms against them everywhere. No! To my mind the monstrous ignorance of people in Europe about the affairs of Asia is beyond all belief, for an enormous mass of correspondence is always going on between the two continents, and the movement of travellers between them is equally great. Besides, though the Government of India is despotic in theory (and necessarily so), in reality it is as free as any in Europe. There is no preventive censure of periodicals, of which there are a great number: 1. The Calcutta

¹ Ed.—*Francis sahib Kaptan Kendi sahib ka dost.*

John Bull; 2. The Calcutta *Harkarah* (Hindustani for *The Messenger*); The *East Indian Gazette*, the *Government Gazette*, the *Literary Gazette*, etc., etc., etc., not to speak of the papers published in Bengali and Hindustani. Nothing could be easier, it seems to me, than to deduce the true state of affairs from the contradictory reports of these various journals; and all of them go to England. Yet the mass of the English public is as ignorant of the affairs of India as we are in France. A few of the little newspaper cuttings you sent me, to inform me that the Afghans had sent an embassy to the Russian general at Erzerum and that the King of Lahore, Ranjit Singh, was also inclining towards the Russians, amused my Indian friends. Here we are exactly a day's march from Ranjit Singh, and on fine days can see a considerable part of his territories; yet we are as supremely indifferent to him as we are to the Emperor of Japan. The forces maintained by the Company on the North-West Frontier, at Delhi, Karnal, Meerut, Agra, Muttra and Ludhiana, would suffice to invade the whole Punjab without any movement of troops from the interior of India. Ranjit Singh might risk a battle behind his existing line of defence, the Sutlej, but this would give the English a precious opportunity of annihilating him within half an hour. As for the Afghans, "that bellicose nation", as your paper says, "which has so often invaded India, and can muster thirty thousand armed cavalry", that is a bit strong! The days of Mahmud of Ghazni and Timur are gone by. They are very inferior to the Sikhs—just strong enough to have an occasional brush with Ranjit Singh.

The latter is having his army trained in the European fashion and almost all his officers are Frenchmen. The chief of them is a M. Allard, who is very well spoken of on this side of the frontier. A month ago three young French officers, one of them a younger brother of M. Allard, passed through here on their way from Calcutta to present themselves to Ranjit Singh with a view to entering his service. Not only did the Government here allow them to pass through and move about freely, but they met with much politeness on their long journey. Lord William Bentinck regrets that the Russians were so stupid as not to take Con-

stantinople, and even if they were to occupy the whole empire of the Turks he would not think himself any less safe in Calcutta, or even in Delhi or Simla.

In order to maintain his little army of from thirty to forty thousand men on a European footing Ranjit Singh is obliged to load his country with crushing taxation which is ruining it: several of his provinces are crying out for the English and I have no doubt that some day or other (though not for many years to come) the Company may move the bounds of its empire from the Sutlej to the Indus. The Punjab split off only a hundred years ago, after the invasion of Nadir Shah, and forms a natural part of India. Its religion is almost the same and the language, too, scarcely differs at all. The sequence of the seasons is the same. But the English will not conquer this territory except in the utmost extremity. All the additions they have made to their territories during the last fifty years, outside Bengal and Bihar and the empire formed by Colonel Clive, have merely diminished their revenues. Not one of the provinces they have acquired pays the expense of its government and military occupation. The Madras Presidency as a whole has an annual deficit. Bombay is even farther from covering its expenses. It is the revenues of Bengal and Bihar, and especially Bengal, that, after meeting the deficit on the provinces of the north-west and west recently annexed to the Calcutta Presidency, Bundelkhand, Agra, Delhi, etc., keep the finances of the two secondary States afloat. We in France look upon the plea of necessity advanced by the English to excuse the prodigious aggrandizement of their empire in Asia as a hypocritical farce. Yet nothing could be truer, and there has certainly never been a European Government that has met its engagements so faithfully as that of the Company has done.

Your map in four sheets is not the same as mine, but I know it. It is a very good one, and you can follow me on it step by step, except in the hills. Since you love this country for my sake and wish to know it, pluck up all your courage and ask for Mill's five folio volumes [Mill, *History of India*] at the Library of the

Institute or the Royal Library. It is beyond comparison the best book. Perhaps the two quarto volumes by Dr. Heber, the late Bishop of Calcutta, would amuse you more, but they would only give you very poor information—"It is a regular milk and water". You are annoyed at those parts of the Deccan which are blank on the map and marked "unexplored country"; but set your mind at rest. If this were true, I should be careful to take a strong escort with me; besides which, the danger one runs there is that of dying of starvation, thirst and ataxic fevers (malignant typhus), rather than of being attacked by marauding bands. But there is no point in visiting them. They are waterless deserts covered with miserable forests, with a few huts scattered about them at long intervals; I saw a good specimen at the outset of my journey, between Raghunathpur and Sherghati [Schirgotti]. In many parts of India anyone passing through these dread regions between September and January is sure to meet his death, and the danger is as great for natives as for Europeans. You may trust to my prudence and entire acceptance of the limitations of place and season.

The learned or literary societies in the United States have their equals in those of India. As societies the latter are worse than anything imaginable in their ignorance, silliness and childishness, though there are naturally a few men of worth in all of them, especially in Calcutta: Horace Wilson, for instance, the leading Sanskrit scholar in the world, polyglot, literary, a poet and a man of learning at the same time. Read his *Theatre of the Hindus*: they are sure to have it in the Royal Library. Yesterday I was writing to my former host Sir Edward Ryan and my amiable neighbour at the same period, Sir Charles Grey, Chief Justice of India; and in explaining to the latter why I was not sending any learned papers to the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, and in order to prove that the Society is absurd, I wound up the list of my grievances against it with the fact that he is its President, though he has not the slightest qualification even for being a member. The Chevalier Grey's very great merits will find scope in a political career. His brief leisure is reserved for

European literature, and he cares about as much as you do for the history and antiquities of this land. My own contempt for them equals his. Sanskrit leads to nothing more than Sanskrit. The mechanism of that language is incredibly complicated, though admirable, they say. But it is like one of those machines which are never seen outside museums and collections, being ingenious rather than useful. It has served no purpose save to fabricate theology, metaphysics, history with an admixture of theology and other nonsense of the same sort; a doubly and trebly nonsensical rigmarole both to the manufacturer and the consumer, and for foreign consumers in particular it can be expressed in terms of nonsense by the formula $\frac{1}{0}$. Arabic is not exempt from the same reproach. The allegorical mysticism of Orientals has found its way even into the elementary notions of the physical and mathematical sciences which they have acquired. The part played by the brahminical myths in the movements of the planets and the principles of physics complicates the understanding with such peculiar difficulties that the doctrine of the Trinity rendered into good French is about as lucid. Yet Sanskrit, and Orientalism in general, will remain in fashion because those who have spent, or wasted, fifteen or twenty years in learning Arabic or Sanskrit will not be honest enough to admit that they have mastered a useless branch of learning. Upon my word, d'Eckstein has a perfect right to pretend that he knows them, and the rigmarole he gives you, *se non è vero, è ben trovato*. Try reading Schlegel, who is honest and conscientious, and see if the difference is so very great. Try Cousin. Is there not a family resemblance between the absurdity of Benares and the absurdity of Germany?

To go on to your second letter, in which your Afghans again appear, as well as the probable war between England and Russia caused by the latter's hostile designs on India and sedition in the Indian army. The whole thing seems highly comical at Simla. Porphyre's moustache is something new; but I flatter myself that my own does not fall short of it. It is an adornment with which ecclesiastics are almost the only men to dispense in the

north of India, and is peculiarly appropriate to the country where I am travelling at present. . . .

As regards the picturesque India is very poorly endowed. Or I sometimes ask myself whether this is simply because the capacity for wonder has dried up in me. Yet I passionately admired the natural beauties of Santo Domingo and afterwards of Brazil. No, the fault is not in myself: it lies with the things themselves, with the country. . . .

I am leaving all the collections I have made since entering the mountains in charge of my gunner-king here, and in a few days I am leaving him and shall travel by way of Kotgarh, Rampur and Sarahan [Sourann], my road lying along the banks of the Sutlej in a valley that is the hottest in India. I shall have myself carried by porters in a sort of armchair. At Sarahan, the summer residence of the Rajah of Bashahr, I shall once more enter the hills, dismissing my porters, whom I shall probably replace by a *gonti* [*ghounte*], or hill pony, a small breed, but wonderfully clever and strong. My suite will then be reduced to some fifty persons, costing me from seven to eight hundred francs a month, and it is only by reducing my personal luggage to the strictest necessities (and as a matter of fact it will not include even these) that I shall be able to advance with so few men. In the autumn I shall return by the Buran-ghati [Borounda] Pass, crossing the central Himalayan chain either here or direct to Sabathu, Sabatou or Subatou, Captain Kennedy's winter residence (if he has already come down there), sending my baggage on before me; and from Sabathu to Saharanpur, no longer in the hills, where I shall reorganize my outfit for travelling on the plains. I have left a considerable portion of my baggage and collections there. The whole lot will be sent off to Delhi, where I have already left a preliminary instalment, and when I have seen my carts start off from Saharanpur, instead of jogging along slowly beside them through a province absolutely devoid of interest, bringing up the rear of the procession, I shall gallop to Meerut in a single day and spend a few days recovering from the fatigues, privations and miseries of every sort that I shall have endured by then. I do not know Meerut, but I have a host of

acquaintances there—I might almost say friends. Perhaps I may have a little leisure in Kanawar and find an opportunity of writing, but this is not probable. So after this letter you may expect a long interval of silence. However long it may last, remind yourself that I shall then be in a country as healthy as Europe, eating apples and grapes, drinking the local vintage (which is execrable), and lastly, remember the French song, which runs:

“Know that the Tartarians
Are no barbarians,
Save to their enemies.”

Adieu, adieu, I love you and embrace you with all my heart.

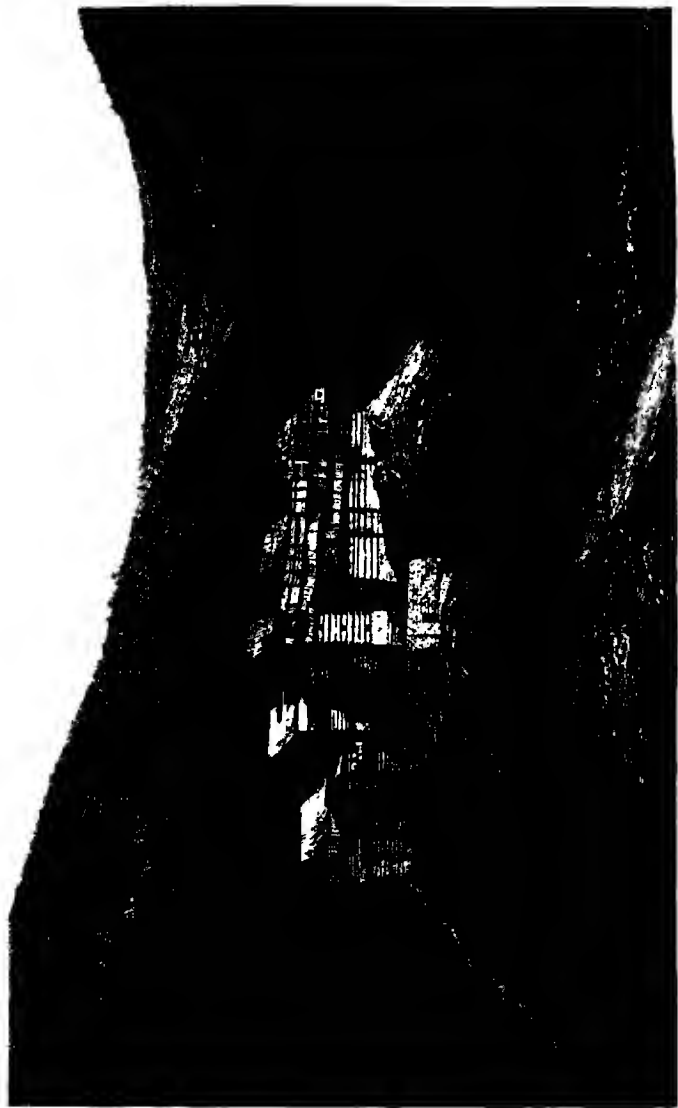
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(C.F. XXXI)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Chini [Tchini] in Kanawar
July 15, 1830

Just a few words, my dear father, to profit by an opportunity which will probably not present itself again between now and my return to Simla. I left there on June 28, loaded by my host, Captain Kennedy, with even more courtesies, perhaps, than it had yet been my lot to receive. He had made admirable arrangements for my journey through these parts, and when I arrived at Sarahan, the summer residence of the Rajah of Bashahr, the Rajah came to call upon me as soon as he could, offering me every service in his power. I had a draft on his treasury which it was not convenient for me to cash quite yet, and another on one of his subjects, who was absent. The amounts specified on both of them will be paid me at sight in the Rajah's name wherever it is convenient for me to demand them. His little chancellery has written to all the chiefs in the higher regions of the country and to the lamas of Ladakh



By kind permission of Monsieur Alfred Martinou

RESIDENCE OF THE RANA OF JUBBAL

Described as follows in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India (Punjab, ii. 370-71)*: "The Rana's residence is built in partially Chinese style, the lower portion consisting of masonry, while the upper half is ringed round with wooden galleries capped by overhanging eaves. The palace is remarkable for the enormous masses of deodar timber used in its construction."

that they are to carry out all my wishes; so I hope to be able to make my way right on to the plateau. The Rajah, like Captain Kennedy, has also given me his principal servant to act as my interpreter and give orders everywhere in his master's name, which finds none here to question its authority. Further, my janissary from Simla has a few Gurkha soldiers under his orders, so that with these resources in the way of persuasion and coercion I have no serious fear of dying of starvation or being brought to a standstill in the midst of my travels for lack of anybody to carry my baggage.

A writer of stories could make something glorious out of the Rajah's visit and his arrival, fan in hand, in the midst of a raging hurricane, which threatened to blow down the tent where I was awaiting him, while his viziers—for that is what ministers are called in Hindustani and Kanawari—his court and people had been summoned to shout their version of "Long live the King!" Like Louis XIV on a different occasion, I regretted the burden of my grandeur, which would not permit me to return the King of Bashahr's visit, for I was very curious to see the interior of what is called his palace; but Kennedy had justly reproached me with spoiling his allies by this excess of condescension. It was for the Rajah to come in all his royal pomp and feel honoured at my kindly allowing him to sit on a chair in my presence and shaking hands with him. I could not have embraced him or reciprocated any present or visit without lowering my dignity.

But pray be careful not to suppose that he is the lowest type of bandit, living in a cave and dressed in tattered scarlet, with quantities of daggers, pistols and other melodramatic weapons stuck in his belt. The Rajah of Bashahr is a legitimate king, who reigns *da sire* (or *de sire*—like a lord, or the wax model of one)¹ over a degree and a half of latitude and two or three degrees of longitude. But although the greater part of his States is buried beneath the Himalayan snows, while nine-tenths of the rest is

¹ The allusion is to a misunderstanding on the part of Jacquemont's father, who read the Italian words *da sire* (=in lordly fashion) as the equivalent of the French *de sire* (=of wax) in a previous letter, and wondered what his son meant.

covered with forests and the remaining tenth with arid pastures or bare rocks, he has a revenue of a hundred and fifty thousand francs; yet he is not extortionate in his treatment of his subjects, who are the most wretched creatures imaginable. His *naza* [*nazzer*], or offering, consisted of a bag of musk wrapped in the animal's skin, a rare product which is native to these mountains and, I hope, lacks neither the local colour nor the perfume of Tibet. The only thing I gave him in return was a lesson in geography which he badly needed; he leaves his viziers to study this subject and passes his time with slave-girls from Kashmir, whom he fattens by cramming them like fowls in coops. They are probably not very pretty, for the women of Kashmir are not in general, whatever people may say.

On July 11 I crossed the Sutelj, or, if you do not consider that name grand enough, the Hyphasis; since then I have been advancing along its right bank, or, more precisely, three, four and sometimes five thousand feet above its right bank. The climate is beginning to be very different from that of the southern slope of the mountains. Here there are nothing but wind and haze, whereas on the other side the rain is coming down by the bucketful. There are apple-trees and vines in the gardens, though unfortunately no apples or grapes at this season: they will await my return. Buddha is now beginning to steal the clouds of incense of which Brahma has the exclusive enjoyment on the Indian slopes of the Himalayas. The religious precepts of Miss Frances Wright as regards sexual promiscuity are practised here, for not only polygamy, as in India, but polyandry, too, prevails; and since the latter institution is the prevailing one, the result is an excess of females, who retire into convents situated near the little abbeys full of lamas—no doubt for mutual convenience.

At Kanum I shall shortly see that incredible Hungarian original M. Alexander Csoma de Kőrös,¹ of whom you have doubtless heard. He has been living there for four years past under the not very modest name of Sikandar-beg, that is to say, Alexander the Great, dressed in oriental fashion. But now he is

¹ The famous Hungarian philologist and authority on Tibet.

ready to cast off his sheep-skin and black lamb-skin cap and resume his own name for the purpose of going to Calcutta and boring you, no doubt, with the Tibetan Encyclopaedia and all its rigmarole, which he has just translated. M. d'Eckstein will take exception to it, you will see; yet M. Csoma is the only European in the world who understands this language. The Tibetan Encyclopaedia is strong on astrology, theology, alchemy, medicine and other nonsense of the sort, no doubt translated from the Sanskrit at a remote epoch. If only M. Csoma will give it to us in German and M. d'Eckstein translate it from German into French, we shall have nonsense raised to the fourth power, an expression whose far-reaching significance Porphyre will explain to you if your own algebra does not go far enough.

My health is excellent. Milk I shall find everywhere, I have rice enough for three months, sugar for the same period, forty-six pounds of the finest tobacco bought at Rampur for the purpose of making presents to the Tartars of Spiti (which cost me seven francs). When the mornings are cold I smoke the best leaves rolled up in paper as I ride along. It is better than what the Government sells at forty-six times the price in Paris. I have had a new cook since leaving Simla, who is at the same time my steward or butler: he has the reputation in the hills of a notorious rogue, but provides me with as good food as the resources of the place allow—that is to say, worse than very bad—an immense improvement in my household, for his predecessor was a good fellow, but his handiwork defied the most robust appetite. The mountains here, by a heavenly piece of good fortune, produce rhubarb, but that is not all: after a three months' search the Rajah of Patiala—one of those whom I shall embrace and whose visits I shall return—that admirable ally of the English power, with a revenue of four millions, has written an official letter to my friend the ex-assistant-resident of Delhi, since promoted to be political agent at Kotah, saying that he has found my syringe. The news appears in the *akhbars* (his court gazette, kept in manuscript). He has sent it back to the resident at Delhi under a strong escort, where it has been deposited in the resident's palace,

and I have received an official communication asking for instructions on how it is to be sent to me or whether it is to be kept till my return. One would think it was a barometer or a pneumatic machine. Yet at the head of these letters is printed: "Political Department".

So I shall bring home the most diplomatic and historic syringe that ever existed. You shall leave it to Porphyre and it shall be handed down in the male line. If Porphyre does not marry he has brothers worthy to possess such an object.

Rumours have reached my ears that Porphyre's moustache might be bushier and more uniform in colour. Mine is above reproach, an inch long, as thick as a postillion's pigtail and of the most uniformly sandy shade. It is enormously admired in Kanawar, but I deplore this beauty every morning when I am eating my pottage.

While the political resident at Lucknow, at a salary of two hundred thousand francs a year, is sweating and stifling in his palace, I am warming myself by the fire in a nasty little house worth, perhaps, a thousand or two thousand francs, which he built here two years ago for the purpose of spending a fortnight in it. What a luxury a house is, however small and bad!

I am extremely busy and shall stay here only long enough to make up my arrears of labour. I will close this letter, only adding that it will be sent off with my No. 7 to the Jardin des Plantes. It is now twenty-three months since I left France, and I have not yet had a single line from the people there.

Adieu, dear father; have no fear of Burmese revolts or risings in the army, or of the great impending clash of interests that is being debated in the English Parliament. It is always the English newspapers that inform us how the ground is trembling beneath us here, for I assure you that nothing could be firmer. As for the only real dangers, which are caused by the climate, be comforted by the Rajah of Patiala's lucky find. I embrace you with all my heart, and Porphyre too.

Write to me as before, and always send your letters by a boat belonging to our navy. Adieu, adieu.

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(R.H.L., 1904, p. 301, No. VII)

[Written in English by Jacquemont]

*To Mademoiselle Zoé Noizet de Saint-Paul, Arras*¹

Camp at Tasigong [Taschigung], on
the borders of Ladakh and Chinese
Tartary, August 24th 1830

MY DEAR ZOÉ,

Just as I had sent one of my hill followers towards Simla, the first English station on the southern side of the Himalaya, a Tartar came from Sangnam [Soongnum], a large lamah village of Kanawar, and brought me, with many others, your charming letter No. 3 (10th of February). To reply you properly would require a volume, and it would be a delightful pastime to write that volume, staying a few days idle in camp. But I am hunted out by interest, by business from every quarter of botany, of geology, etc., etc. I must go on and cannot indulge but in a few lines. Had your letter reached me yesterday morning, with a lot of others, these lines would be travelling now down to India. But a few weeks sooner or later, at the distance we are from each other, does not matter much.

I am now coming back from an half-armed excursion I made within the Celestial Empire. I managed it most successfully and without being obliged of committing any decided hostilities, but by making a show of shooting arguments, in the case of any opposition from the Chinese, I saw very quietly the object of my curiosity. I had to march five days without any village and crossing two high ranges above 5500 metres, or 18,300 English feet (2500 feet above the top of Mont Blanc). Supplies were also to be carried with me for the same time on my return, and my party

¹ A first cousin of Jacquemont's, with whom he was on intimate and confidential terms.

amounted to upwards of 60 men. Loads of new plants and of organic remains, that I had found at the enormous height of 5600 metres, with many interesting observations of natural philosophy, repaid me amply for the troubles and toils of my expedition. Now I am invading Ladakh [Ladak] for visiting some mountains, where, from some accounts of the hill people, I hope to observe several interesting geological phenomena. I have crossed this morning the Sutlej [Sutledge] to follow nearly the course of the Indus. Both here are but large torrents being so near from their source. The Sutlej issues from the celebrated Lake Mansarowar [Mansarower] and the Indus, with the other greatest river of India, the Brahmaputra [Bramapoutra] or Burrampouter, from its immediate vicinity. The hill Tartars have nothing indeed of the ferocity generally granted to them, and although amongst my numerous followers there are but six men badly armed, the *francis saheb*, [*Fransisi sahib*] or French lord, as I am called, would drive out like cattle thousands of them. But they are good, quiet people, that crowd habitually round my tent for getting some tobacco, of which I brought from India several loads to distribute amongst them. When their extreme curiosity makes them troublesome, a simple word disbands them. They know nothing of the servile manners of the Indians, and so rapid are the progresses of our corruption amongst the latter that at Pekha (?) [Bekhur], the Chinese town I stormed, the headman coming to me for complaining of my violation of His Most Theific Majesty's territory and advancing very near without dismounting, I felt, sincerely, so indignant at this want of respect that, in a passion, I took the fellow by his long plaited tail (at the risk of establishing a communication between its contents and my sleeve) and threw him from his horse.

It is true, my dear Zoé, that my English improves wonderfully by a few glasses of Porto or Champaign, but in this most bleak, barren and desolated spot there is but the water from the spring, a very poetical beverage, but very little exhilarating; don't judge of it after this short and flat specimen, for indeed I cannot help to be a little vain of it after the compliment I received yesterday from

Calcutta. Lady Ryan, to whom I was a guest for a few weeks, writes me: "M. Pearson told me one day in speaking of your letter: 'M. Jacquemont does not, perhaps, write quite like an Englishman, but he is delightfully original, and his words and expressing are always most happily chosen'. I do not wish to make you vain, so I shall not tell you what I think on the subject, nor what was my reply to M. Pearson's remark."

You may call this to trumpet oneself, but an allowance of self-trumpetting ought to be made to those that have no trumpeters. That M. Pearson was my first and my standing host in Calcutta; he is the general advocate of the presidency, paid for it 100,000 francs a year, besides what he makes by his private business at the Bar (about 250,000 or 300,000 francs); for in England the King's advocates are entitled exactly like the others to plead for private individuals. He is by his talents, in and out of his profession, the first man in India, quite a high and kindred mind; it was an immense advantage to me of being so long a guest to such a man.

A daughter of his that left Calcutta and India unexpectedly a few days after I had departed with that amiable and hospitable family writes me from the Cape of Good Hope so friendly, so sweet a letter that I cannot postpone to reply to her. Poor young girl was sick and ordered by the medical men to repair immediately to England, and she went out with her mother, leaving M. Pearson alone. She was by no means pretty, but through the free intercourse that English manners admit of between men and young girls I saw in her so much of natural talent, so much of high feelings that she inspired me with a most friendly interest. I was not long also to discover that she suffered not only from bodily sickness, and though we dwelt never on that subject she was sensible that I tuned the whole of my relations and conversations with her on a great and tender seriousness. She perceived that I knew what she could not confess me, and that I pitied her, and she proved a friend to me for it. I will write her like an eldest affectionate brother.

There is, my dear, there is also a pride of the heart from which

I derived perhaps never more of pleasure than in this foreign country. I received nowhere so many attentions that were paid to me out of that source, and do you know what is my magic to provoke English sympathy? I do not aim at their elegant stiffness of manners, at their cold reserve. I do not give to my feelings, my opinions an English shape, a foreign fashion, when I express them in English words, but I play naturally the character that nature gave me, with its faults and deficiencies, and that in the coterie of my friends Mérimée, Stendhal and others gained me the name of Candide. This openness almost unknown to Englishmen is nevertheless exceedingly acceptable to them, as many suffer or feel uneasy all their life for the restraint that the customs of their country impose to them on the manifestation of their feelings. Often indeed after twenty-four hours of acquaintance, Englishmen and women spoke with me of things they would never say a word to their best English friends.

Society is by no means a translation of *société*; of the latter they have none. To it we are indebted for an easiness, variety and for an elegant unaffected light or serious fluency of conversation that rises the most indifferent amongst us over what they call their greatest conversational powers. They beat us on the field of the speech—but even to them, it is not a very recreative thing, a speech! And moreover out of that solemn and affected heavy style of conversation, they have but loose words and loose ideas. They overvalued me very often on that account.

Does not the plural person I am obliged to make use of in writing you, my dear Zoé, sound strangely to your ears? This language now is as familiar to me as ours; yet I am not reconciled to the coldness of the plural person. It is a great lameness in my opinion and it will make it always unpleasant to speak with those that in our own tongue I am used to address in a more tender form.

They say generally that I have an uncommonly good pronunciation for a foreigner; however I am to be recognized very soon as a foreigner. It will afford me a great delight, my dear Zoé, to impart to you the advantage that I might have over you, on

that ground, when meeting again. As to the real knowledge of the language, I have no doubt that by that time you will have a better one than me. Although an English born, the fair (by the bye, not so fair) teacher of Porphyre possesses but a very slight knowledge of it, and cannot talk neither write fluently but on the most commonplace topics, and so I shall not run the risk of writing to Porphyre in English.

Here comes my dinner. The water from the spring (for I preserve carefully for bad days, snows, my nearly exhausted stock of French brandy), very coarse cakes made of oats, of barley flour hardly ground, spinage, or rather instead of it, the leaves of buckwheat (*sarrafin*) that have nearly the same taste, apricots, the only fruit of those high regions, but as small as cherries and unflavoured yak's milk, and as the groundwork of the whole system, the bones of a late Scotch mutton ham. This is a pretty fair average of my cook's skill; to get so scandalous a dinner I must keep a cook and an assistant cook, properly a scullion intended to clean the plates, of which I have two. As it would be a thing worth damnation to embrace you at the conclusion, I shall, for being English till the end, remain, my dear Zoe,

Your very affectionate cousin,

V. J.

I will send you from Tibet an anemone that I have gathered in the hills at a greater elevation than the interior limits of eternal snow under the Equator in America.

How flat is an English letter! Yorick's interlocutor was right: "They manage much better those things in France".

VICTOR

Camp at Nako—25 August (1830)

As it requires a sheet of paper to enclose the two first ones, I avail myself of that necessity for continuing some little talk with you, my dear Zoé.

. . . You will find always somewhat difficult to understand

Shakespeare thoroughly; so is to me, even at this time. The difficulty does not lie only in obsolete words or allusions to the transient trifling events of his time, but in the subtle and metaphysic turn of his very thought. Avail yourself of the notes of his commentators; those of Dr. Johnson and Malone are by far the best. Dryden has added a gun to the catastrophe of *Romeo and Juliet*. Such a mind as yours Thomas Moore will tire to death, and though you love the flowers he will likely inspire you with a perfect abhorrence for them. He is like a perfumer's shop. Byron—oh, this one is not tiring; but he is provoking, when he seems to have been deeply moved, when you are just beginning to sympathize with him, then he turns short and laughs at himself and at you. I think he is generally overvalued. Read Milton, that is the great man! Of Pope's poetry you must know something as a specimen of unremittent perfection and noblesse of style. I think that his *Essay on Man* (a very short composition) is the best calculated to introduce you to both. The philosophical epistles of Voltaire are far beneath, at least for the style. If after you have done with the English you incline still to indulge in the Italian, I promise you the true Roman pronunciation of some sonnets of Petrarch that I keep by mind and Georges,* on the other hand, infusing to you his achievements of the kind, you will be able to enjoy the fascinating melody of many delightful stanzas of Tasso. To some melancholy topics you have touched in your letter I do not allude, my dear Zoé, 'tis better to try to forget them; at least not to dwell upon them purposely. Adieu, my dear, the blank beneath I reserve it for the day when I shall forward this to you.

15

(C.F. XXXIII)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Camp at Nako in Hangarang, 25
August 1830 (frontier between Ladakh
and Chinese Tartary)

This Delhi paper, which is botanical rather than literary, simply drinks up European ink; and so, my dear Porphyre, I am forced to put blue instead of black on white for you. The place from which I am writing is twenty-five days' march beyond the last English station, and is probably one of the highest inhabited places on the globe, being at an altitude of four thousand metres. Yesterday, as I was coming up from the banks of the Sutlej, which flows a thousand metres below, a Tartar from the vizier of Sangnam, who was nimbler than I am at climbing almost vertical slopes, overtook me and handed me a packet, thoroughly water-proofed by grease and dirt, in which I found, among many others, letters from you, Father, Madame de Perey and Zoé. That was all from Europe; but there were many more from India and Africa. I read those from Father then and there, and yours a thousand feet higher up, but not till this morning did I finish with the African and Indian ones. It is strange, but the day before, another courier—though these couriers are Tartars, they do not exactly run, but help themselves along over the rocks with both hands and feet, and as soon as they have gone thirty steps, stop to pant and draw breath to go another thirty—it is strange, I say, but on the day before another messenger had succeeded in finding me, too. This one had brought nothing but letters from India, but a good packet of these. There were a few which I felt it right to answer without delay, and yesterday morning, on striking camp at Namgia [Namdjah], I despatched one of my men to Simla

(twenty-five days' march away) to hand them over to Kennedy, whose business it is to direct them to their ultimate destination. One of them—and this will astonish you—was addressed to M. Allard, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and *generalissimo* to Ranjit Singh, Rajah of Lahore; the man, in fact, who appeared to occasion the Directors of the Company in London such alarm when I applied to them for a passport. From Simla I sent you (or perhaps Father) certain information about M. Allard, who enjoys the most honourable reputation among English officers. In the packet that arrived the day before yesterday I found a letter from him, which he had sent me at Simla. Here is a copy of it, for it is not long:

LAHORE, July 28, 1830

"MONSIEUR,

"I have heard from Dr. Murray of the arrival at Simla of a French traveller, distinguished for both his learning and the mission with which he is entrusted. This news makes me hope that an old officer may find himself able to be of use to one of his fellow-countrymen in lands so remote from the mother-country. It is on this account that I have the honour of sending you this letter by one of my *harkaras* [a sort of footmen, chamberlains, janissaries or whatever you like]¹ to offer you any service which my position with the Rajah of Lahore may enable me to do you. Command my services, Sir, with the same freedom as that with which I offer you them, in token of our common nationality. Meanwhile believe me, etc., etc., etc."

I was touched at this cordial offer from a person unknown seeking me out at the ends of the earth, on the frontiers of China, and I am sure I answered him with warm cordiality. My answer is too long for me to copy it out here, though I have kept a copy of it. But here is the gist of the most important passage in it: "To visit the plains of the Punjab (the region between the Sutlej and the Indus, where Ranjit Singh is firmly in the saddle) would be of no great use to me; but if M. Allard could overcome the Rajah's

¹ Note by Jacquemont.

unwillingness to allow Europeans to enter the land of Kashmir, and could succeed in obtaining this permission for me while guaranteeing my perfect security, I should be indebted to him for a very great service. As a point that could be stressed in trying to induce the Rajah to let me see the mountainous parts of his empire, M. Allard might tell him that my researches place me in a better position than any other man for discovering mineral deposits that could be worked to advantage."

His letter proves beyond a doubt that he has no doubt of being able to get me as far as Lahore; nor, indeed, is there any reason to doubt this. Whatever he may be able to do beyond this, I have pretty well made up my mind at least to pay him a visit. For after all, once I am on the spot it is possible I may find a way to get something out of Ranjit Singh.

The possible is impossible to predict by reason of its variety. Perhaps, indeed, it will amount to nil. That is what I am most probably going to Lahore to find out. It would take only a fortnight's march across the plains to reach this great city, in which I should live in comfort as the guest of the French *generalissimo*. Once the Rajah has let me get in I cannot fail to be taken to his durbar and incidentally pick up a good Bokhara horse and a Kashmir shawl, instead of the tawdry stuff which the Great Mogul sold me like a Jew at Delhi. In any case, I shall not cross the Sutlej (I mean from India to Lahore, for I cross it every week here, and did so only yesterday) without writing to tell Lord William Bentinck.

And now I come to your two letters. It is really most extraordinary that none of my letters written from Calcutta in May, June and November had reached you by February, 1830; but after all, my dears, you promised me to take in ample supplies of peace of mind in case of accidents not only to me but to my correspondence. After endless delays a letter of mine to M. Victor de Tracy arrived just in time to show you to what risks it is exposed. Moreover, you had news of me from Calcutta in July and August indirectly, through Mareste, yet you persist in being uneasy. It grieves me when I think that far longer intervals may elapse with-

out your hearing anything about me at all. If we are not to condemn one another to much suffering, you really must have confidence in my tough and sinewy fibre, my prudence, and—what shall I call it?—my adroitness, and manage to fill up the blanks in my correspondence with nothing but happy thoughts of me. I have always done this in my thoughts of you. But I must confess, Porphyre, that I was impatient to know how Father had got through the terrible winter of whose unwonted rigours I had read in the English newspapers.

As for the Jardin, I have not heard a word from it or its denizens since the kind letter I received from Jussieu and Cambessèdes at Calcutta. If the fault is theirs, devil take them! Not a word from England either. Yet Sutton Sharpe, Séguier and Sir Alexander Johnston cannot have failed to answer my letters. Yes, if they received them. It is maddening! To return to your letter . . . You might have told me who had been singing to you and what they sang in return for your subscription to the Bouffes. How strange it all seemed to me in Tibet, where they also sing a great deal (for there are one or two inhabitants to the square league), but never any song but one, having three words: *Oum mani padmei*; ¹ which means, in the learned language, which none of the villagers or their lamas understand: "O diamond lotus!"—and takes the singers straight into the paradise of Buddha. You may laugh [—] ² to scorn in my name, with his accidents by land and water. Tell him that for several months I have gone without hearing the sound of a European voice, and the staple ingredients of my dinner are abominable; yet I do not complain of it. Apropos of dinner, I have found the recipe for perfect health: spinach made of buckwheat leaves produces the desired effect; coarse griddle-cakes of roughly ground wheat, with all the bran left in the flour, confirm this improvement, thanks to which I have nothing whatever to envy you. It is wonderful; on bad days, for instance, when I have been camping at an altitude of sixteen thousand feet, I brought out the bones

¹ *Ed.*—*Om mane padme om.*

² Name suppressed.

of what was once a leg of mutton smoked in the Scotch fashion, which I shall probably end by eating, for they cannot be tougher than the meat which was once on them. But Kennedy sends me word that he will regale me with truffles every day on my return to Simla. The expedition, during which I had to climb four times to such an enormous altitude (seven hundred metres higher than the summit of Mont Blanc), had as its object some fossiliferous strata whose existence I had assumed and did actually verify. At the same time it provided me with a number of new plants. But five days' march without passing a single human habitation, the lowest of my camps being at an altitude of fourteen thousand feet, meant that I had to take provisions with me for twelve days; for in any case the Chinese town or village, which it was most doubtful from the start that I should succeed in reaching, was sure not to be able to provide me with anything for the return journey. My little army, for I was committing a real act of hostility against His Theific Majesty of Pekin, consisted of more than sixty men, six of whom were combatants, including myself. By an unusual stroke of fortune I found the vigilance of the Chinese at fault on the frontier, and the unexpected arrival of my caravan in a serried column was such a surprise to the people of Pekha (?) that they fled at my approach without offering any resistance. I camped peaceably, though on a carefully selected site, and on the following day I received a call in my little tent from the Chinese officer in command of a watch-tower not far from there, built of mortarless stone and equipped with two leather cannon. He had come to complain; but instead of this I treated him as the culprit, asked him a number of questions without allowing him to say a thing except by way of reply, and when I had said all I had to say, dismissed him and his myrmidons with a nod. I purposely assumed a threatening air and ordered my men to do the same, in the hope that this demonstration would suffice. The people of Pekha (?) had no idea of such a thing as a double-barrelled gun, still less of one fired by percussion caps.

The effect of two shots which I had fired in succession at a

neighbouring tree a few moments before granting my audience to the Chinese officer in the presence of several of his followers, produced a wonderful impression on the subjects of the Celestial Empire. I had a little tobacco given them, which made them love me as much as they had feared me before. A curious incident occurred which vastly increased their respect for the French lord. Though worn out with fatigue, I was about to resume the march. I therefore drank my stirrup-cup—that is to say, I poured out a spoonful of brandy for the purpose of dissolving a lump of sugar in it. Since the sugar refused to melt, I set fire to the brandy, and when it had melted I blew on my spoon and swallowed this mouthful of punch. The people of Pekha (?), who are not gunners, thought I was drinking fire and took me for the devil. That was the day on which I camped at such an altitude—16,000 feet. I was still on Chinese territory, where I wanted to determine the lie of certain strata on the following day. During the night some mounted men came and stationed themselves near my camp. I was aware of their arrival, however, and of the smallness of their numbers. Treating them as of small importance, I started my explorations by examining the lie of the land at daybreak, followed by half-a-dozen servants at most. The Tartaro-Chinese cavalry then began to move, following in my footsteps, though at a respectful distance. I ordered one of them to approach, and when the fellow came to speak to me without dismounting, I seized him by the pigtail and jerked him off his horse. You see, old man, what it is to have lived in India for a year. One feels genuinely insulted by any conduct that is not servile. In this case I was in the wrong, for the poor devil at Pekha (?) knew nothing of Indian etiquette. But I saw only one thing, the colour of his skin, and, regardless of what a different place I was in, I treated his ignorance as if it had been a deliberate piece of audacity—*inde irae*, hence my wrath. His companions put their horses to the gallop and fled. My man remounted his nag with great difficulty and joined them as fast as he could.

After dinner

Here I am, in spite of my thick woollen clothes, swathed in blankets from head to foot as well. This is how I have to dress up every evening, and even then I often suffer from the cold. What a strange climate! It snows a little in winter, when there is not a single day's thaw for four months; it hardly ever rains, but blows a perfectly rainless hurricane every day at three o'clock, lasting well on into the night. I often wake long before daybreak, freezing beneath my five blankets.

The fellow from the vizier of Sangnam sent me a little present with yesterday's packet of letters, a small basket of wretched apples, just as Divine Providence created them—a great treat here; but the grapes will be ripe when I descend once more to Sangnam, the highest spot at which the vine flourishes (10,000 feet), and then I shall have a regular treat. Among my Indian letters received yesterday were some newspapers, by courtesy of Kennedy the gunner. . . .

. . . Supposing, as will not happen, that direct government by the King were to succeed that of the Company in India, this change could take place without the slightest shock to Asia. Father seems to be uneasy about the possible attitude in such a crisis of the Mahrattas, Afghans, etc., etc. (and other rabble who are not worth so much as a kick). Let him realize that the sixty millions of Indians who alarm him do not know the difference between the King of Walait [Valaite] (that is, Europe as a whole, or England, or America, etc., for they are not very strong at geography) and the Company. This subtle distinction is more or less grasped by the upper (trading) classes only, in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. But the peasant who tills the soil, the artisan who works and the sepoy who mounts guard have no ideas on the subject at all. The ideas about this country that people in France get into their heads are pure nonsense. The governmental ability (Saint-Simon and his lot on the *Producteur* have no doubt invented a better word to express this idea than *habileté gubérnatrice*) of the English is immense; ours, on the other hand, is extremely poor, and we therefore suppose them to be in diffi-

culties when we see them in conditions in which our clumsiness would be nonplussed. Again, Father regrets that I have not brought with me all the papers that might assist me in establishing my French nationality—as if papers, forsooth, could prove it to those in whose eyes it would be useful to do so, if what is in the back of his mind were to happen! As if they could read the European alphabet! As if they understood a single word of a single European language! But let him set his mind at rest: he may live to be a hundred before hearing of a general massacre of the English in India. The cold is getting doubly keen, my dear Porphyre, and I shall never get warm on my pallet if I delay throwing myself down on it any longer. I embrace you.

August 26

I return to you, *mon ami*. . . .

My credit of six thousand francs expires at the end of 1831. By November 1, when I come down from the mountains, I reckon that I shall have a balance of three thousand or two thousand five hundred, making eight thousand five hundred in all. That is enough for my visit to Lahore (if I am to return with no more followers in my train), and for getting from there to Bombay, or even Pondicherry, on arriving at which place I shall still have enough to pay my passage to Europe on one of those excellent merchant-ships which give one such good food. That, old man, is what I call providing for the worst contingencies—that is to say, allowing for the possibility that the Museum may forget to notify me of an extension of my grant.

You will have to sell a few shares in a ship in order to pay carriage on this letter, and Father must part with a few volumes of his *Essences* to some stupid publisher, to whom I specially charge Taschereau to recommend the deal.

Adieu, *mon ami*; do envy me my moustache, which is five months old, a foot long, and of the most vivid red. I can light my cigarette at it when I smoke for a few minutes in the morning to warm myself on bad days. Adieu; I love you and embrace you with all my heart.

16

(Corr. *indd.* II, No. LXI)*To Colonel Don José de Hezeta, Calcutta*

Camp near a village X (name unknown) and another called Ghuyoumoel,¹ Guimul, near (that is to say, eight or ten miles away from) Mighoeul, Tassa, Tsara, etc., etc., on a most meagre stretch of grass sixteen thousand feet above sea-level, in the little region of Spiti, which seems to me to dispense more or less with any king of its own, but pays a small tribute of horses and blankets to the Rajah of Bashahr, the Rajah of Kulu [Koullou], the so-called independent Rajah or Khan of Ladakh (stay-at-home geographers are idiots), and finally to the Grand Lama at Tashilumpo [Teshoolomboo], Lat. 32°10 or 15, long. 78° and any no. of minutes you like. Sept. 3, 1830

Each of us in his turn, my friend. You wrote me the most pathetic reproaches on my long silence and promised me a letter every month. If there were any bailiffs in Tartary, I would send some immediately to remind you of your promises. In default of a man in black I will write you a simple, touching little discourse.

Like me you have seen the prison built for prisoners in "*solitary confinement*" at Philadelphia, and like me you have doubtless been very much bored by the controversy over the probable effect of

¹ *Ed.*—It is difficult to identify these place-names in Spiti, as Tibetan is very hard to write down phonetically. Ghuyoumoel may refer to Kiomo, on the left bank of the Spiti River. Jacquemont appears to exaggerate the altitudes considerably, as there is no village in Spiti more than 13,500 feet above sea-level.

such confinement. In the opinion of some great controversialists madness was bound to be the result. Well, dear Hezeta, since leaving Simla in June I may say that I have been living in "*solitary confinement*". For here the adjective is the main thing, just as the sauce is often the making of the fish. Solitary confinement or solitary wandering, it is all the same thing, and judging by my own experience the American controversialists were right. I am not quite mad yet, or even obsessed by manias; but when my thoughts start out on their travels and go on visits to those I love, no sooner have they arrived at the door than I am seized with a dread of finding them dead, ill or ruined, etc., etc., and hurry back to Tartary as fast as I can without even daring to ask the servants how they are. Tall, pale and thin as I am, with a pulse that beats sluggishly, I am inclined to paint anything lying beyond the horizon in dark colours rather than in rosy ones. And this, my friend, is why it is your duty to tell me their real colour. It is not so much that I am afraid you may die, for this is an accident just as unsuitable to you in India as to myself; it is all very well for Englishmen, who translate "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" by "Death rather than a clyster", to let themselves die like dogs rather than swallow a cupful of lukewarm water the "*wrong side*". But the important thing is indigo! You were afraid lest you might have too much of it; perhaps you now find that you have made too much, and are wondering how is it going to find a market. Every time I have received any newspapers I have read the "*indigo prospects*" with avidity, but it is from you and you only, my friend, that I ought to learn the results of your campaign, whatever they may be.

My own, to the north of the Himalayas, has gone off most auspiciously. I have not died of starvation, and though the cold at the higher altitudes damps my animal spirits to a notable extent, the thermometer might fall another ten degrees (18 degrees F.) or so and I should still have three blankets in reserve against it, on top of the five in which I am already wrapped.

I have collected a large number of new plants, but above all I have made a quantity of geological observations which would

strike me as remarkably interesting even if they had been made by someone else. They inevitably lead me to a conclusion very different from those arrived at by the monstrously blind "*surveyors or geological superintendent of the H.C.*", who draw salaries of two or three thousand rupees a month for failing to see what any budding mining engineer from Paris would have seen simply staring him in the face, though his salary would only have been fifteen hundred francs a year, or forty rupees a month. Confident of the blindness of those visiting these parts after me, I have refrained from sending a note on this point to the Institut for the purpose of claiming priority, at least, for this discovery. I remember hearing Lord William Bentinck say that there was no European government that had spent as much on scientific work as the Company. Well, I vow he did right to cut down the pay of his scientific men.

My geological researches have twice taken me on to Chinese territory. The first time, by a most fortunate chance the whole population of the frontier village was occupied in walking in procession at some rather remote place of pilgrimage, and before they had even heard of my approach I had camped with all my men—seventy in number—below Pekha (?). I treated the wretched Chinese officer who came to complain on the following day as though he had been in the wrong himself, and when I had deafened him with questions without allowing him to open his mouth except for the purpose of replying, I completed my reconnaissance, mounted my horse again and continued on my way to Kanawar singing *Om mane padme om*, after presenting the lamas of the neighbourhood with a goodly quantity of tobacco, which made our farewells thoroughly friendly. During this short expedition I had four times to cross passes at an altitude of 18,300 feet, and to camp one night at a height of 17,000 feet. Five days' march without a single inhabited or habitable place, but sufficient examples, both in quality and quantity, of the lie and order of outcrop of the strata to compensate me magnificently for these miseries, not to speak of a hundred and twenty new plants as an extra recompense. Since then I have left the valley

of the Sulej, where there was nothing more for me to do, and attacked that of the Spiti, its northern branch, which comes down from the regions of Ladakh and Kulu. The lower end of this valley belongs to the Rajah of Bashahr, a tributary and most humble servant of the English; but afterwards, higher up, I had again to enter the territories, or rather the rocks of His Most Theific Majesty. This time his faithful subjects were at their post on the banks of the torrent separating the two states. They said to me in Hindustani: "*Hukm nahin!*" [You cannot pass], to which I replied in French that I was charmed to see them; and, still laughing at their bad temper, I made my horse step into the torrent and advanced towards them singing: *Om mane padme om*. It was explained to them that I was not going on into Chinese Tartary, but wanted to profit by the first bridge I came upon to go over into Ladakh. They were now quite delighted to act as my guides and lead me there. The treasures of my bounty were thrown open for their benefit and they smoked the calumet of friendship with my tobacco in their iron pipes. The hill-men here have not the slightest objection to letting me advance, but they are rogues who sell me their flour at an extortionate price.

However, to-morrow I shall finish the difficult task of working out the classification of the various rocks in the neighbourhood, and resume my progress towards Kanawar, the first village of which I shall reach after marching for seven or eight days. In a fortnight's time I shall be eating grapes; in twenty-five days' time I shall be crossing the southern range of the Himalayas and visiting a few places which I still have to see on the Indian slopes. I shall descend upon Simla, where Captain Kennedy promises me four *pâtés de foie gras* from Périgord. I will write to you from there.

These Périgord *pâtés*, a base and prosaic incident if ever there was one, none the less remind me of the week I spent with you at Barrackpore, for there was one at tiffin as a result of which my resolutions of abstinence always came to grief when I exposed myself to the risk of temptation. I shall never forget, my dear Hezeta, those days when I had the happiness of living beneath

the same roof as you. I was depressed at that time, or at any rate, my mind was occupied by unpleasant thoughts. I was alarmed at the laws of speed which seemed to regulate the flow of my rupees, and when I considered the poverty of my resources I was afraid they would not allow me to travel as it was necessary for me to do; since then I have discovered how to do so with strict economy, and in spite of the extra expenditure into which I have been led by my expedition into the mountains carrying my medical kit, when I return to the plains and replace the forty, fifty or sixty porters I require here by one or two camels, my finances will be more brilliant than I had reckoned. All the same, their condition is in proportion to my simple, modest habits, and there is not a single Englishman in our position in life who would not consider them the reverse of brilliant.

Adieu, old fellow; since nobody can see us, I embrace you with all my heart. I cannot tell you how ridiculous it would seem to me to sign myself "yours truly" or even "yours sincerely" to you, or for you to write the same to me.

P.S. 1.—Stationers are monstrous rare in Tartary, and that is my excuse for the shape and quality of this paper.

P.S. 2.—One word more. This place is higher than Mont Blanc. Now Saussure says that at an altitude of 15,000 feet (the height of Mont Blanc) it is difficult to breathe and one has almost unendurable pains in the head and ears and complete lack of appetite; and English travellers in the Himalayas talk of "an uncommon depression of spirits". Well, I ask you if that is true of me. But in point of fact it is spirituous liquors, even in very small quantities, that produce the symptoms here ascribed to the rarity of the atmosphere. I am drinking water, though I have a good store of brandy, and I protect myself against the cold by quantities of blankets. Good-night! Oh, how cold my bed is! And my poor devils of servants sleeping beneath the open sky! Now complain if you dare!

(*Corr. ind.* II, No. LXIV)

To Colonel Don José de Hezeta, Calcutta

Simla, October 19, 1830

Here I am at last back in Europe again, my dear fellow. It is a week since I returned to Simla, where I had the satisfaction of finding under Captain Kennedy's hospitable roof the enormous collections which I have sent to this point from time to time during my travels beyond the Himalayas. As I now examine these specimens at leisure, I am finding a number of novelties which are a compensation for the deprivation of society from which I suffered on my expedition. Apart from my plants and stones, I also found here two huge packets of letters from Europe, all exactly as I should have wished them to be, and a few from India which, though not so satisfactory, are none the less pleasant to me for the tokens of friendship which they contain. Yours, sent on by M. Pakenham [Packenham], combines the former of these conditions with the latter in an unfortunate fashion; it leaves me in a state of painful uncertainty as to your fate. But can I manage to express, my friend, how much I am touched by the brotherly confidence with which you tell me of the depressing side of your affairs? Even when Englishmen have really kind hearts, they are strangers to that tenderness, that sweet abandonment to which we other continentals owe so many pleasures or consolations. Their reserve certainly lends their domestic life a dignity which we forget in ours, but they purchase this outward semblance at the cost of many of the pleasures of the heart. Let us keep our simple good-heartedness and never form ourselves on this assumed appearance of rather unamiable sentiments. Let us remain true to our own countries in this respect: we could not fail to lose by forgetting them.

The gazettes had given me a rough idea of the serious dis-

turbances and acts of violence of which the indigo-factories are usually the scene; and since hearing of them, it is a constant source of surprise to me that the Government, possessing as it does the right of banishment, has not made a severe and salutary use of it from the first. You know whether I hold liberty desirable or not; but liberty without equality is the most unjust of all privileges. Hence my opposition on principle to most of the complaints made by the European inhabitants of this country. In practice I should act on those principles; and if I were in Lord William's place, I should hold a confidential enquiry into the characters of the indigo-planters and manufacturers, and which of them were conspicuous for their violence and depraved morals. I should arrest a dozen of them and ship them straight back to London, without bothering about whether I ruined a few families or not. I am sure that, having once made an example like this, the High Court of Calcutta would no longer have to try three cases of murder in one week.

When crime is so rife, ordinary methods of repression are absolutely inadequate. In Corsica the French courts condemn three or four murderers to death every year. This is a great many for a population of a hundred and fifty thousand souls, but it is not enough to reduce the number of murders, which is appalling. Such a country ought to be placed outside the law for a year or two and under the jurisdiction of military tribunals, which would, perhaps, shoot some few hundred avowed murderers against whom no witnesses dare give evidence. After a salutary reign of terror, restore the civil courts with their protecting formalities, and these will suffice to keep the peace in the country. This method succeeded very well when we used it once in Piedmont: a temporary evil in order to obtain a lasting good.

The Calcutta gazettes are incredibly stupid on the subject of French affairs, having no understanding of either things or men; and I long more eagerly than ever to have a chance of reading our own. Yet all my letters from France are filled with nothing but everybody's petty family news. . . .

I shall never forget the aspect of nature in the little corner of

Tibet of which I caught a glimpse, and if fate ever casts me up once more on the shores of equatorial America among the marvels of their vegetation I may perhaps love to recall the bareness of these mountains and the aridity of the deserts, those pictures of desolation in which life is nowhere to be seen. They have such an extraordinary character that their image will never fade from my memory. But their monotony is almost like that of the ocean, whose poetry I have never felt more than feebly. The sky is cloudless, the air soundless, the earth devoid of verdure. Even on the very spot where one received them, the sort of impressions made upon one by natural scenes of this sort would be hard to communicate to others, and it was not there that I regretted travelling alone in the Himalayas. Perhaps one day I shall take up my pen and try to retrace these strange scenes, of which I have made only a few sketches so far, as lifeless as themselves. There is one thing of which I shall be very much afraid if ever I become the author of anything more than a book on geology or botany, and that is, of being a bore. But I should be equally afraid of being amusing at the cost of truth. Contrast in detail would be a source of charm; but how, without lying, could I achieve variety in depicting what is monotonous? Without laying on red, blue, yellow and green where there is nothing but grey and white? How could I show what an event it is to come upon a tree or a house after several days' march without seeing a single plant or man? Perhaps, my dear Hezeta, it may be granted me to visit other parts of the Himalayas, which it would require less talent to describe pleasingly. I am at present negotiating for permission to go to Kashmir. While I was in the depths of Kanawar I received by way of Ludhiana and Simla a gratifying letter from M. Allard, a French officer in command of Ranjit Singh's troops, to the effect that . . . "he would be happy if his position about the person of Ranjit Singh might enable him to facilitate my researches in the Punjab, if I had any idea of extending them beyond the Sutlej. . . ." But now comes the devil of it all! Since M. Allard wrote me his last letter a scoundrel of a *Sayed* whom I should like to see hanged has made a surprise attack on Peshawar, and in order to turn him

out again Ranjit is marching troops towards Attock. The latest *akhbars* announce that Messrs. Allard and Ventura will be in command in this war, and have already crossed the Ravi with the cavalry. When will M. Allard return to Lahore? That is the question. I am very much afraid that this accursed war may deprive me of the tempting chance that has offered itself of visiting this celebrated country, which has become such a mystery to Europeans owing to the impossibility of their getting into it for such a long time past. An English physician in my place would have very little hope of being granted the passports from Ranjit Singh which M. Allard undertakes to obtain for me. My French nationality is a valuable qualification here, and it would be a great pity if political events on the upper Indus were to prevent me from profiting by it.

While waiting for the upshot of all this, I am indulging in a little slackness in this novel Capua. After sleeping for four months in a nasty little tent which a raging, icy wind often threatened to overthrow, I find it glorious to sleep under a roof, protected by solid walls. My host's cook is not one of the smallest "*blessings*" of civilization to my mind. I ride a dozen miles every morning for reasons of health, and five or six every evening to counteract the evil effects of this good food, which, I am more than ever convinced, is unhealthy for Europeans in this country. In a week's time I shall resume my solitary, roving life, pursuing my march through the foot-hills that flank the Himalayas in the direction of Saharanpur. There I expect to find the solution of a few important geological problems. What anybody else would probably find there at this time of year would be fever; but given a suitable diet I have great confidence in my tough and stringy constitution. I hope that you have long since received my letter from Tibet, which I closed at Sangnam. Not knowing where to find you at present, I am sending you this through M. Pakenham.

Your next to Delhi, please, "*care of M. Metcalfe*".

Adieu, dear Hezeta; I have many people to satisfy, and that is why I do not cover five or six sheets of paper. Adieu. I embrace you.

18

(C.F. XL)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Sabathoo, Sobatoo, Sabatoo,
Soubathou, and so on *ad lib.*
November 1, 1830

MY DEAR PORPHYRE,

My last letter was very long, and was accompanied by another equally long one for Father, both dated from Nako in Hangarang, August 26. It was in answer to two letters which succeeded by a miracle in reaching me in Tibet or at the ends of the earth, but it had other things to say besides. In case it was lost, I will repeat part of its contents, without which this one would be unintelligible. Ranjit Singh, King of Lahore, has a number of French officers in his service. His generalissimo is a certain M. Allard, formerly one of Brune's aides-de-camp, who seems to have turned up at various Asiatic courts in the hope of obtaining a military command. He went to Egypt, Syria, Constantinople and Teheran, and finally, in 1822, arrived in Lahore. Ranjit did not engage him without asking the consent of the English Government, for, by the terms of the treaties, he must not admit any European to his army. But English policy has changed considerably since this treaty was made, so the Calcutta Cabinet's reply to the Rajah was that it would not insist upon the observance of this article. Since then it has allowed several other French soldiers to travel freely from Calcutta to the Sutlej frontier, notably a younger brother of M. Allard's, whose avowed object was to enter the service of Ranjit Singh. The English Government regards these attempts at European discipline and civilization beyond the Sutlej without jealousy, although they are French, and individual Englishmen seem very well disposed towards our fellow-countrymen in the Punjab. I have never heard them speak of M. Allard, in particular, with anything but esteem.

[Jacquemont here quotes the letter from M. Allard cited above in Letter No. 15, p. 122, and his own answer to it, and continues:] Here is his answer, which I found at Simla last October 13:

"Amritsar [Umbritsir], September 27, 1830

"MONSIEUR,

"Your reply, which I was awaiting with the greatest impatience, reached me at Amritsar, where the Rajah usually assembles his troops for the Feast of the Dasehra [Desserré]. When I had the honour of writing to you, I flattered myself that you would be pleased to receive my letter; but I was far from expecting that it would bring me so many kind words from you, which I accept gratefully, though they can add nothing to my sincere desire to be useful to you. I am only too happy if, by my position in this kingdom, I can facilitate the scientific discoveries which, with truly amazing courage,¹ you have come to make in these regions bristling with so many difficulties. However that may be, my good-will, added to that of my good friend and companion in arms M. Ventura,² who is no less impatient to make your acquaintance than I am, makes me feel sure that I shall be able to smooth away many obstacles for you if you decide to cross the Sutlej. It is true that our Rajah does not look with pleasure upon visits to his kingdom, and especially the province of Kashmir, from Europeans coming from India; but if you can obtain letters from the Governor of Delhi, or even from Captain Wade, to Ranjit Singh, that will smooth away the preliminary difficulties, and, for the rest, it will be our business to provide for your security and needs: it is a legitimate occasion for expenditure when such a fellow-countryman as M. Jacquemont is travelling in the Punjab. Lord William Bentinck and Sir Charles Metcalfe were not misleading you when they assured you that travelling in the territory of Kabul was impracticable. To attempt such a thing would be to expose oneself to almost certain perils. I am

¹ Jacquemont comments: "*Blague, blague* (Gammon, gammon!)".

² Jacquemont's note: "Ventura, an Italian officer in the service of Ranjit, formerly in our (the French) army."

sending my letter to Dr. Murray at Ludhiana, who will be so kind as to forward it to Captain Kennedy in order that it may be sent on to you. I hope it will soon reach you and induce you to continue a correspondence to which I attach the greatest value. Once again, Monsieur, I offer you my services of every kind, and beg you to believe me, etc., etc."

In reply to this second letter from M. Allard, I said that I had made up my mind to pay him a visit and put his influence with the Rajah to the test. At the same time I wrote to Lord William Bentinck informing him of my project and requesting him to have a letter of introduction to Ranjit sent me, couched in the terms most likely to promote the success of my negotiations. I shall receive his reply within twelve or fifteen days.

Ranjit Singh bears a certain resemblance to the Pasha of Egypt. Europeans in his service are no doubt exposed to occasional injustice, but not to anything serious. When M. Allard has reason to complain of him, he is not afraid to treat him coldly for a month or two, and so manages to make him revoke the measure which has justly annoyed or affronted him. Ranjit is remarkably shrewd in seeing through dubious adventurers and getting rid of them.

I have requested Lord William to call me by the title of "Lord Doctor Victor Jacquemont", and in order to live up to my title of *hakim* I shall take a few pounds of cantharides with me. During his embassy to Kabul, M. Elphinstone was simply adored because he distributed Venetian pills in every direction. One of the most prevalent maladies in the East is premature impotence. The Levantines are quite aware of how to cure themselves of it from time to time by the use of cantharides, but east of Persia this resource is unknown.

Whatever Dr. Wallich may have done or caused to be done, enough botanical novelties will still remain to give me a pretext for a botanical work which shall be more than a mere "flora", that is, a description of the various kinds of plants in the Himalayas; and if I am not mistaken, the book which I am thinking out—it will not be a very long one—will not be devoid of interest.

I shall compare the vegetation of the Himalayas with that of the Alps, the Rocky Mountains to the west of the Missouri and the high Cordilleras of equatorial America.

During the last six months many pages of my diaries have been occupied by geological observations, and these will enable me to do something more than a "first-hand description," a commonplace study, of which many parts of the Himalayas have formed the subject on various occasions. The general upshot of my observations gives me cause to think I shall be in a position to arrive at conclusions opposed to the generally admitted ideas with regard to original rocks. I cannot deny the accuracy of the observations made by M. de Humboldt in both the Cordilleras and Europe; but I think that the exposition of my conclusions will make his very dubious. A geological work on the Himalayas, or one on the geology of the Himalayas, will be much more sought after in England than in France, and I presume that an English version might sell in London. I think of boring myself by translating my own work into that language with certain variants, so that the English book cannot be regarded as a mere translation made by a translator at so much a page. But perhaps I may find more than boredom in writing in a foreign language. Even now I should have courage enough to venture on such a task, and it will certainly be still easier for me in a few years' time. My English correspondence, of which I often complain, will have proved very useful to me.

Appetite grows with what it feeds on. If I spend a few years in the Punjab, I shall not do so without acquiring a perfect knowledge of the quantity and quality of Persian required for the negotiation of official business, and in the course of the political changes that are no doubt in reserve for our country in the future, perhaps I might for a time find some profitable employment in the East. Laugh at me as much as you like, my dear Porphyre, and I will join in heartily, but it is amusing to build castles in Spain in a smoky hut.

I have received the *Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes* for 1829, but it arrived by itself, without any accompanying letter.

I neither eat opium nor chew betel. No European chews betel, and very few eat opium. I have just accepted a little parting present from Kennedy: a hookah, which I will present to you on my return, if it is not stolen between here and Paris. Cigars, indeed! The hookah is not a thing one can carry about with one; it is rather a complicated apparatus, weighing about three or four pounds. But the smoke one inhales from it is so mild, so cool, so fragrant! I predict that you will have one in constant use during your old age, and I hope it may be mine from the Himalayas. I do not see why you should worry at the departure of Sir John Malcolm. Nobody here knows his successor, Lord Clare, but all the same I shall have just as good introductions when I arrive in Bombay.

Kennedy goes up to Simla again to-morrow. At the same time I shall go down to the plains with a new acquaintance whom I like very much; he is a M. Fraser, "viceroy" of Delhi, a civil, judicial and financial officer of the highest rank. M. Fraser was in the Punjab with M. Elphinstone, in whose mission he took part; he knows more about the Sikhs than anyone else in the country. It is providential that I should have met him. The day after to-morrow he will go on to Delhi and I shall return here, from whence I shall start for Saharanpur on the following day by way of Nahan.

Even now I am not accustomed to the strange attraction I have for the English, and am often astonished at its results. The pleasure it causes me is far more than a mere gratification of my self-esteem, for many of them show sincere attachment to me. At Simla I often saw a sick officer, a friend and predecessor of Kennedy's, who left us a few days ago to go to the other end of nowhere (*au diable*), to Hyderabad (the capital of Central India), where he has just been appointed resident [viceroy]. When we bade each other farewell our hearts were full. I should be very sad if I thought I should never see this kind, pleasant fellow again. If I go to Hyderabad I shall be given a splendid time. The men I like most are the soldiers detached from regular service who have spent a long time in political work, or, more

often, in discharging functions which are political, civil, judicial, financial and military all at the same time. It is from them that I learn most about the affairs of the land. I am like one of themselves. . . .

19

(C.F. XLI)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Delhi, January 10, 1831

Where shall I begin, my dear father? My last letter, written from Simla and Sabathu, was dated November 1, when the latest news from Europe for us in the Himalayas only came down as far as June. But now I have just read the *Débats* of August 8 and the *Gazette de France* of the 10th and know the full sequence of events which have taken place during the interval.

It was in the last days of November at Saharanpur that I heard the first sounds of the tocsin. It was night-time: just as I was going to bed after a long day spent in study far, far from Europe, about to sleep on my day's meditations about India, a messenger came galloping up to my camp bringing from a European habitation near by a *Calcutta Gazette*, printed in an unusual form and with the following headline in large type: THE NEW FRENCH REVOLUTION.¹

I accepted the contingency and was prepared to purchase liberty at the price of some thousands of men's lives and a month of civil war. But on reading my paper I soon learnt that the Parisians had made better terms than this. Not that there were no casualties, but it had taken only three days' fighting to crush counter-revolution in Paris. The great cities near the capital had behaved like Paris, and though my stodgy reports left off at July 31 and did not even vouch for the accuracy of the events

¹ The July Revolution of 1830, which placed Jacquemont's friends in power.

given under that day's date, I slept peacefully till morning with no fear of being roused by more shooting.

This news had reached Calcutta by an English vessel which had left Southampton on August 2. Since then another has arrived from Bordeaux, having left on August 11. It sailed up the Ganges flying the tricolour flag and all the other ships of our nationality lying at anchor in the river promptly ran it up too. I was at Meerut, the largest English military station in India, when it was reached by the tide of news brought by that ship. Everybody, friends and strangers alike, came up to me and congratulated me upon being a Frenchman; I defy M. de la Fayette to have shaken hands with more people in a day when he was in America. My host, a cavalry colonel—the only one of his regiment who escaped at Waterloo, and then only with a bullet through his body—wept with joy as he embraced me. The rigid etiquette of English manners was entirely put to rout by their enthusiasm, and the stampede is not over yet! I might throw my passports and letters of introduction into the fire, change my name, preserving nothing but my French nationality, and start off for Cape Comorin, and there is not a European in India who would not receive me with open arms. These rejoicings are something new to me: I do not know how to convey the idea of them. All shades of political opinion among my hosts are lost in the same feelings of admiration, love and gratitude for the name of a Frenchman, and since I am the only man here who bears it, it is I who receive tokens of it everywhere.

On the last day of the year which has just ended all the civil and military officers of this province joined in celebrating the occasion by doing me honour. It goes without saying that any constitutional and genuinely English celebration was bound to take the form of a banquet, and you may guess that the general enthusiasm did not let me off without a speech, but I was attuned to my hosts' mood and it was not hard to find words.

Here, I think, is the least bad specimen of my improvisations in English, among a number of others; do not forget that this

one came after several toasts and wild cheering in honour of France and quantities of bottles of champagne:

"Gentlemen, I have no words to express you the tumultuous feelings of happiness that excite in my heart your hearty cheers for the prosperity of my country. If anything can console me of being so far from it, when I might have shared in the dangers and in the glory of my fellow-citizens, it is certainly the present circumstance of my sitting a guest to your banquet; it is the sublime spectacle of your enthusiastic sympathy for the righteous victory of my countrymen in a holy cause. I shall remember always with the deepest emotion this memorable, this most poetical occurrence of my life. These British acclamations for the liberty of France, resounding in this far distant land of Asia, at the gates of Delhi . . . will awake in my grateful heart, so long as it breathes, a poetical echo of admiration. Here I resume these glorious colours which adorn alike your breasts in this patriotic meeting, and which wave over us, mixed by your kindly hands with the noble colours of free England. Gentlemen, let us hope they may be never divided! Too long indeed they were opposed to each other! . . . Both, then, waved over victories unparalleled hitherto in the records of history. Mournful were those victories, which proved often ruinous to the conquerors as well as to the conquered! . . . Gentlemen, it is not as the symbol of military glory of my nation that the tricolour flag is so dear to me; I do not cherish the recollection of a glory bought by the miseries, by the oppression of all the continental nations of Europe and by the political servitude of France herself. I admire, but I lament that glory which united all the peoples of Europe in a feeling of hatred for the French name, and which finally made twice the deserted eagle and the independence of my country a prey to the storm of European popular revenge. The Gallic cock which surmounts the tricolour banner of the 28th of July brings to me no such recollections: it is not a bird of prey, a symbol of conquest, but a national and spirited emblem of industry, of watchfulness, and of strength also and of undaunted courage. Iniquitously attacked by the Prussian eagle during the domestic struggles of our first revolution, it

drove it fiercely backwards to the Rhine. . . . Had it stood there! . . . Had it not undergone its imperial metamorphosis, and flying over the frontier inflicted desolation on the peoples of Europe for the wrongs of their kings! . . . Gentlemen, believe me that those feelings which I have so feebly expressed to you through a foreign language, but which live so warm in my heart, are shared in by the immense majority of the generation to which I belong, and which now assumes the political power in my country. Believe me that equally proud of British friendship, equally convinced that the union of France and England, the leaders of modern civilization, would prove a blessing to both, and countenance everywhere the generous efforts of liberty, and secure throughout Europe the steps of social improvements and human happiness. Believe me, gentlemen, that all my countrymen would rise with me and rapturously propose with me the toast I beg to offer: France and England for the world!"

It is doubtless painful to my modesty as an author to add that I was several times interrupted by gratifying murmurs and that more than once these pleasing murmurs swelled into thunders of applause; but as an impartial historian I am nevertheless bound to confess it. Do not draw any adverse conclusions with regard to my hosts' literary taste from this, my dear Father, but remember the place, the circumstances, the vicinity of the Great Mogul, etc., etc. The whole thing is still like a dream to me.

I had received my baptism of fire in the way of speeches in most timely fashion at Meerut, where it so happened that my stay coincided with a great series of military inspections. Each was followed by a banquet to the general who held the inspection—I could not have avoided being present at all these parties, which rarely ended without a toast proposing the health and success of the traveller, etc., etc., in some such terms as: "May he sometimes forget among us that he is far from his own land!" Every morning I resolved afresh that I would be stolid that evening, and so speak better; but these resolutions always failed me in my need. Yet I did not regret them; for my thanks, which arose on the spot out of the compliment which called them forth, were always received with favour.

In spite of the distance of eighty-four miles, I rode from Saharanpur to Meerut in a day. My friends at Meerut had arranged for nine relays of post-horses for me, a thing existing nowhere else in India. I arrived towards nightfall so little fatigued that on finding Arnold, my host, ready to mount his horse and go out for a ride, I asked for a tenth horse, and accompanied him then and there. My friendship with this excellent man is really quite a curious thing. Each of us lives his life according to a very different order of ideas. Nor is the resemblance any greater in externals. He is a splendid cavalry officer, mad on his profession and the magnificent body of men of which he is in command. But you know that I am fated to be liked by the English; I simply let them go ahead, for I really cannot see what I can do about it.

It is three days' march from Meerut to Delhi, or about forty miles, which I did at a gallop between lunch and dinner last December 15 side by side with my *fidus Achates*. On the previous day I had received your letters Nos. 16 and 17 (15 is still on its way, accompanied by Beaumont's book, etc., etc.) and one from Lord William Bentinck in reply to mine from Simla in which I had expressed a desire to visit Kashmir and asked for his diplomatic good offices with Ranjit Singh to help its gates to be opened to me. With Lord William's letter to go upon, I had hoped on my arrival to find the resident¹ actively disposed to second my plans. But he had been given only the most limited powers in this respect. He had been resident at Delhi only a fortnight, having just arrived from a similar post at Hyderabad, and was not yet very well informed about the relations of his court with that of Ranjit; so he was afraid of the responsibility and seemed scared of acting on his own account within the limits laid down for him. I accordingly wrote again to the Governor-General. The reply I received to this second letter is a great proof of his esteem. He authorized the resident to do for me what has invariably been refused to English officers who have made similar requests to the Government during the last few years.

By order of the Governor-General, the resident officially pre-

¹ William Byam Martin.

sented me to Ranjit Singh's minister, who is accredited to him. He explained to him what I am—no easy thing in Persian—the nature and object of my studies, the friendly terms on which I am with the English Government, the exalted protection with which it has surrounded me during my travels through its territories, the personal interest taken in me by the Governor-General, his desire to see me extend my researches to the lands subject to the absolute power of Ranjit Singh, etc., etc. In fact, this small but delicate negotiation was conducted in the happiest and most skilful way possible. I spare you the Persian superlatives with which the resident felt it incumbent upon him to load me so as to give the Sikh minister a high idea of my character: I was the well of learning—nothing less!—the *verum lucens* of the Chevalier Antoine Lafont, radiating truth, etc.¹ In fact, I can count with certainty upon a gracious reception by Ranjit Singh. M. Allard, his French *generalissimo*, has already taken it upon himself to send firmans to the officers under his orders who are in command on the frontier. He has instructed them to obey my wishes and escort me from Ludhiana to his headquarters at Lahore. I am starting for that place in a few days' time.

If I did not avail myself of this splendid opportunity of visiting a famous land inaccessible to European travellers since the days of Bernier (1663), I should regret it all my life; for since that date nobody has seen it but Forster, thanks to a disguise which made it impossible for him to look at anything. After the despotic prince who is at present maintaining public order there by terror, the anarchy which had ravaged it for a century past will certainly start again and prevent any undertaking such as I am about to attempt there from offering an equal chance of success. I owe this gratifying and promising prospect to the fortunate accident of having entered into relations of friendly esteem with the Governor-General and maintained them. No friendship in Asia could be a better recommendation to the king of Lahore.

Lord W. Bentinck always finds time to write me long letters

¹ See *La ver luisant, le vrai principe du mouvement des invisibles et des visibles*, by the Chevalier Antoine Lafont (Paris, 1824), a perfect farrago of nonsense.

when my interests demand it, and always in his own hand, though he has secretaries who have also secretaries of their own. Yet what does he owe me? A passport once and for all, and no more. The case is different with the gentlemen of the Jardin des Plantes, whom I might well regard as being under greater obligations to me. . . . The only resources at my disposal are those I brought with me, and they will be exhausted by the end of the year now beginning. Possibly prudence would counsel me to make straight for the nearest port instead of starting for the distant land of Kashmir; but I regard the proffered opportunity of visiting it as an imperative necessity, for a whole century may well elapse before it presents itself to another traveller. By the time this letter reaches you it will be urgently necessary for me to be sent the means of returning from it. I should like to see those who may, perhaps, censure me for attempting it exposed to the fatigues and privations that await me on this journey. The pleasures of Kashmir! The delights of an enchanting climate! Oh, there are some fine phrases on the subject to be made by those who stay comfortably by their own firesides in Paris! The tales about the East told in the West are pitiful! Ask Colonel Fabvier what Greece is really like, and one day I will tell you what Kashmir is like.

It is not impossible that I may have a companion, M. William Fraser, commissioner at Delhi, that is to say, head of the civil, judicial and financial administration of that province. M. Fraser is a man of about fifty who, but for certain oddities of character, would occupy a higher post than he does here: he would be a resident, with a salary of two hundred and fifty thousand francs a year, instead of the one hundred and fifty thousand attaching to his present position. All I know of him is from seeing him for two days in Kennedy's house at Sabathu last November. He was coming down here from the hills, to which his health had forced him to migrate during the abominable rainy season. I liked him extremely, and he was equally taken with me. In order to enjoy each other's company longer we agreed to travel together for two days, each deviating from his proper road, and we parted

friends. This man, who is generally regarded as a misanthrope, though everybody in India does justice to his great qualities and talents, I found the most sociable of men. He is a thinker who finds nothing but solitude in that exchange of words without ideas which is dignified by the name of conversation in the society of this land, so he rarely frequents it. He has travelled a great deal and always alone, because, he told me, he has never found a companion to his taste. For my part the only thing I find odd about him is a perfect monomania for fighting. Whenever there is a war anywhere, he throws up his judicial functions and goes off to it. He is always the leader in an attack, in which capacity he has earned two fine sabre cuts on the arms, a wound in the back from a pike, and an arrow in the neck which almost killed him. This is the price he has paid for always having succeeded in extricating himself from the frays into which he has rushed without being forced to kill a single man; and to me that was the finest thing in his whole story, and indeed in that of everybody in this country—that and his humaneness. To him the most keenly pleasurable emotion is that aroused by danger: such is the explanation of what people call his madness. It goes without saying that, possessing this type of courage, M. Fraser is the most pacific of men. In spite of his great black beard you would take him for a Quaker.

On arriving in Delhi from Meerut I did not find him there. During the winter his judicial duties take him on circuit. On December 1 he had set out to hear appeals in civil and criminal cases, as well as from the financial decisions of the magistrates and collectors in the various districts subject to the jurisdiction of his court. He is now at work at Hansi, from which he wrote a few days ago to tell me of an idea which, he says, has not been out of his mind since we parted—that he should apply for permission to accompany me on my travels beyond the Sutlej. The only stipulation he makes before accepting what he is so good as to call this great favour from me is my sincere assurance that such an arrangement would be entirely agreeable to me. I gave it him in all sincerity. I also told him he was the only man of my acquaintance in India whom I should wish to have as a travelling com-

panion, and in this, too, I was not flattering him. What makes him such a desirable companion is the fact that, being a man of superior intelligence, enriched by long experience in various branches of the Indian administration, he has a mass of facts to tell me, besides settling doubts and clearing up mysteries connected with the working of this extraordinary system of government. His mode of life has made him more familiar, perhaps, than any other European with the customs and ideas of the native inhabitants. He has, I think, a real and profound understanding of their inner life, such as is possessed by few others. I may expect to learn a great deal from his conversation! Hindustani and Persian are like his own mother tongue and he will give me lessons in them every day. And then, supposing some villains were lying in ambush in the depths of a wood. . . . I should do my best, of course, but a little help is not a thing to refuse, and from such a fellow as that I should receive stout support. Though I have not much belief in accidents, and have, I think, to some extent destroyed your faith in them, the imperturbable self-possession of my companion might perhaps serve as a lightning-conductor to your imagination against the unfortunate risks that may occur.

M. Fraser has applied to Lord William Bentinck for six months' leave. There can be no doubt of his obtaining it, but the Governor's goodwill will stop short at granting him leave of absence from Delhi. He has reason to hope that his hospitable relations with a number of Sikhs of high rank, added to his name, which is as well known on the other side of the Sutlej as on this, will earn him a hearty welcome from Ranjit Singh. Besides, he would leave me if his presence with my caravan ever seemed likely to cause it any political difficulties.

I have forgotten to tell you about the arrangement we made for sharing expenses. As a matter of fact it did not occur to me to mention it, for it goes without saying that, being the poorer, I shall regulate them as I please, as though I were absolute master. This year I have seven hundred francs a month to spend. If I think fit to forbid my companion any expenditure exceeding this sum, he will submit passively. Even if I had only a hundred francs

a month, he would cheerfully resign himself to this unsuitable allowance if I insisted upon it.

The castles in Spain that I amused myself with building in Kashmir when M. Allard approached me for the first time in Kanawar have already almost vanished. All I can expect of Ranjit Singh are a Turkish costume and a horse—neither of which I greatly need, but in the East they are always granted to any person of distinction appearing at the prince's court for the first time. Possibly—but this is not certain, still less is it certain whether I shall feel it my duty to accept—Ranjit may grant me a few rupees a day, levied upon the towns or villages through which I pass, as a mark of his royal favour. This is still done in the East. M. Allard, who is awaiting me at Lahore, will decide all such matters for me, for there is always more than one way of looking at them.

My intention—but God disposes!—is either to enter Kashmir by the northern route leading from Attock to Peshawar, and return through independent Tartary and Ladakh, of which I have already seen a little, or else to choose a far more direct route leading to Rampur, the capital of Bashahr, on the banks of the Sutlej, five days' march beyond Bilaspur, the name of which you like so much.

On my way to Delhi I shall pass through Simla. Lord and Lady William, Colonel Fagan, the Chief of Staff, and a number of other persons of my acquaintance will be there to help me forget the miseries of my laborious pilgrimage through the enchanted valley, etc., etc., not to speak of my former host Kennedy, who is expecting me at the end of September.

All my collections are here and in the most satisfactory state of preservation. They are so thoroughly poisoned that they have nothing to fear from the ravages of the insects bred by the climate; moreover, they are carefully packed and ready to start for Paris. If it were not for the expense of this means of transit, I should possibly send them off to-morrow, confiding them to the grace of God on the Jamna and Ganges. But I am deterred by the cost, and perhaps this is all the better for their safety; for,

after all, shipwrecks on the river are very common, as is proved by the very high rates of insurance for shipping. When I made up my mind to leave them in store here until I had added the results of my campaign in Kashmir, everybody offered me his house to store them in, but I preferred the army magazines, where it will be impossible for me not to find them in ten months' time exactly as I leave them now, unless the gunpowder blows up or the English are no longer masters in Delhi—which is just as probable.

A few words on my journey from Sabathu onwards (pronounced Sebātou). There are some very pretty girls there, a remark I have rarely had occasion to make since I have been travelling in this land. They form a small *corps de ballet*, which looks to me very much like a piece of royal magnificence on the part of my friend Kennedy, the least jealous of sultans, and what is more, a trusty friend. . . .

There I left the king or rajah of your favourite village of Bilaspur, a most promising young rogue who amused himself last year by making one of his elephants crush to death anyone in his wretched little empire whom he chose, and, having tired of his prime minister, hanged him just for a change. His subjects revolted and turned him out. The fugitive prince came to Kennedy and asked him to take strong measures against them. But this move was rather ill-advised. Kennedy told him roundly that he deserved hanging himself, and promised to see to it that he should not be able to hang others again. Lord William has only to make a stroke of his pen to wipe out kingdoms of that sort.

In M. Fraser's company I visited the valley of Pinjaur [Pinnedjor], after which I proceeded along the top of some low mountains from Sabathu to Nahan, though not without accident. I was riding up a fairly broad but very steep track. My mount was going quietly uphill along the edge of the precipice, like a true hill-man, when all of a sudden the ground gave way beneath its hind legs. The poor beast struggled with its fore-feet, but after hanging suspended for a few moments, slipped over back-

wards. The fact that I was quite unconscious of my danger proves that I had lost my head. By some miracle a little thorny, stunted tree happened to be growing twenty or thirty feet below me, and I found myself perched on it without the slightest idea how I had got there. All that happened to me on the way was a bruise on my head, no doubt from that of my horse, for it had fallen on top of me. I was looking down to the bottom of the valley to see whether I could catch sight of its remains, when lo! a double miracle had taken place: twelve or fifteen feet below me was another tree, which had checked it in its fall. There it was, waiting quite quietly, like me, till somebody came to set it free. In less than an hour's time we had both been fished up again with ropes by dint of patience and careful handling. One cannot but believe in miracles, for animal magnetism is powerless to explain that one.

Nahan is the capital of Sirmur, a little hill kingdom at which the Sikhs, Gurkhas and English have been mercilessly nibbling away for forty years past. Yet the Rajah still manages to make two hundred thousand rupees a year. His little town, one of the prettiest in India, stands on a spur of a verdant mountain, which towers on every side above deep, damp valleys, thickly clothed with forest. It was in one of these gorges that I met the Rajah, who had come out three miles from his capital to meet me. As soon as I caught sight of him I leapt from my horse; at the same moment he dismounted from his elephant, and we advanced gravely on foot to meet each other. We embraced each other first over one shoulder and then over the other, like uncles in a play, and when we had exchanged all the other formulas of Indian politeness customary on such occasions the Rajah invited me to mount his elephant, climbed up after me, and we started for Nahan. Our elephant was followed by several others carrying the viziers and other great officers of the modest crown of Sirmur. Round us thronged some fifty horsemen, armed and clad in the most picturesque fashion. There were still more on foot, carrying silver maces, banners, halberds, the royal fan and parasol, etc. I had never seen anything before so closely resembling the groups

which a European imagination likes to place against an Indian background.

The Rajah was a handsome young man of twenty-two with the elegant manners of high-bred Indians on the plains, but frank, active and communicative like the hill-peoples. I liked him so much that I spent two days in his capital and passed most of my time in his company. From the house he has built for the convenience of English travellers, and in which I was lodged at first, I went to call on him at his palace in the morning, sometimes on horseback, sometimes on foot. He received me surrounded by all the pomp of his court. The morning was spent in conversation, which often developed into an argument to which we admitted those of the courtiers whose rank gave them the right to squat on the royal carpet near the prince's throne, or armchair, and my own. In the afternoon the Rajah would return my call accompanied by his whole cavalcade, when he would examine everything about me, asking what it was used for and admiring the way in which Europeans move about. Then we would both mount his elephants again and go for a ride round the town or the surrounding country. When night fell he set me down at my door. I enjoyed this evening ride, for, being alone on the elephant, we were free to say whatever we liked, and I would give him a little lecture on morality or political economy which would certainly not have been much to the taste of his ministers. Five or six English travellers pass through Nahan every year on the way to the hills in search of health. For all his politeness my young protégé does not manage to see more than a few of them, and then only exchanges a few formal phrases with them. It is true that nothing is rarer among the natives than the slightest taste for society, but the English never try to discover it, or to cultivate it if by chance it exists. This is why they remain so completely foreign to the people whom they govern. The climate of Nahan is very healthy, but at certain times of year it is impossible to travel through the forests in the surrounding valleys without exposing oneself to almost certain death. The use of tobacco and of rough, full-bodied wines is recommended as a prophylactic. So my old port from Simla flowed

in abundance, and when I left Kennedy he made me accept a hookah so that I could smoke in the native fashion. These precautions were perfectly successful and I returned from the hills to the plains of India with my health unimpaired.

I cannot tell you, my dear Father, with what feelings of sadness I found myself once more on the sandy, desolate plains of Hindustan. They are covered with high grasses, yellowed and dry, and in other parts with a wretched, bleached, prickly scrub which lends the same desolate and mournful appearance to the whole of India and Persia. . . . You often pass the ruins of a village—a mound of clay strewn with potsherds, round which tombs are scattered. Sometimes, twice in the same day, you may pass through a considerable town, with buildings and mosques still standing, built perhaps less than half a century ago, yet no longer containing a single inhabitant. I gained Saharanpur by forced marches so as to cut this tedious period short.

I have just re-read your last two letters, Nos. 16 and 17, both in answer to mine from Benares. So a year has to elapse between question and answer! Well, so be it!

You would like me to become a fairly good Sanskrit scholar. You think that since I have mastered a large number of its roots the study of the language would be easy to me, but you are mistaken. Firstly, in the Hindustani that I speak, that of the northern provinces, the proportion of Persian largely outweighs that of Sanskrit. I use the Persian alphabet for writing, and this script, which is, after all, no more than a not over-legible shorthand, is so difficult that I have had to dispense with learning to use the nagri [*nagari*] characters too, which so greatly resemble the Sanskrit ones. It is the syntax of Sanskrit that is horribly difficult, the principles of word-formation.

When I get back to Paris I shall say “Sour grapes”, like the fox, only with this difference, that I shall say it sincerely. Sanskrit leads to nothing further than a knowledge of itself; as for Persian, my contempt for that language knows no bounds, and I believe that anyone who knows a little and is not paid six thousand francs a year to admire it thinks the same as I do. I am profiting by my

stay here to improve my knowledge of it. A young Brahmin comes every evening to spend an hour with me; we do not read the eternal *Gulistan* of English students, as is usually done, but the Persian Gazette of Calcutta, written in vile prose, but the prose that is really spoken. When the English learn Persian they start by buying the lace, and often die without having a shirt to put it on. For our purposes, Hafiz, Sadi and other dull and boring poets of the same sort are no more than useless lace trimmings.

You ask me whether I have picked any of the beautiful white roses that grow round Delhi. You may be sceptical about these flowers, which are alleged to perfume the whole country. I am still looking for them and have not discovered them yet. I see that Malte-Brun allowed himself some of the licence of a traveller. The most beautiful roses in the world are those of Paris. Not that there is any lack of beautiful things round Delhi, but roses are rare.

I am quite frightened at the length of my manuscript. I often try to devise ways of blending or sorting on some artistic principle the miscellaneous subjects confusedly jumbled together in it. This will be difficult, and I cannot attempt it till I get to Paris. We will consult together on the subject. I take it that we now have a little model Government under the Duke of Orleans, and an economical one if ever there was one. . . . However, I flatter myself that my friends will overcome this tendency on my behalf. I am going to send them a little reminder to jog their memories.

I await with great anxiety your first letters [since the July Revolution]. I do not know the names of any of those killed in Paris, but my gazettes agree that there were several thousands. Fortunately I cannot think of any public building near our house over which fighting would have had to take place.

Adieu for to-day. I am writing to you enveloped in shawls and blankets, with my feet bundled up in rugs. Yet the sun is quite hot, but the air is so cold in the shade that there is sometimes a little ice in the mornings, and the wind makes the cold seem far keener than it is. There are no fireplaces in the houses, at least there are none in that of my host, an old general who is not afraid of fire anywhere else, but has a curious dread of it in his own

house. I was forgetting to tell you that I have been presented with an assortment of medicines here, which I shall philanthropically distribute among the Sikhs, Kashmiris and the rest as occasion requires. What I have been advised to take with me in the largest quantities are immodest pills containing cantharides, for aphrodisiacs of this sort are very necessary to Orientals, who are often reduced by debauchery to a premature impotence of which the poor devils complain quite shamelessly. Dysentery is causing great ravages here, especially among the natives. One of my men had an attack, but I succeeded in saving him. Nine out of ten suffering from this disease die under the hands of the English doctors. The great thing with diseases in this country is to take them at the very beginning. I hardly think of them in connexion with myself, but I am always in readiness to give them a warm reception, so you may set your mind at rest. You mention plague, but it is unknown in India. Adieu; may you be as well as I am. I can wish you nothing better.

Camp at Panipat, January 29, 1831

As you see, I have started on a fresh campaign. It is four days since I left Delhi: to-morrow I shall be at Karnal, on the frontier of the Sikh territory under English protection, and towards February 20 I shall reach Lahore. Exercise, the irregularity of my life on the march and its frugality, have already benefited my health, till it is as good as it was in the hills. Fraser returned to Delhi ten days ago. He doubts whether he will be granted the leave for which he has applied. I received a most friendly message from him yesterday at Samalka, where I had camped. With his letter were two elephants and two confidential personal servants, whose services Fraser begged me to accept as far as Amritsar—a useful addition to the two wretched, starving camels carrying my tents. Moreover, it greatly adds to the imposing appearance of my caravan. My host at Delhi, who was the divisional general there, also gave me a strong escort, which is necessary for the safety of my slender baggage during the night. Perhaps all this justifies the title of *bahadur* bestowed upon me by the engraver at Delhi on

the plaque which I ordered for the herald-at-arms by whom I have increased my household. In spite of this addition, however, you may well imagine that it remains the poorest in India. Your arithmetic will suffice to discover the cause.

Good-night. I am camping here on one of the most famous battlefields in India. It is late, and I leave you to eat my dinner—a poor affair, for it consists of an old peacock. However, it cost me nothing but a shot this morning. Heaven preserve you from such a roast, with brackish water to drink!

Camp at Karnal, February 3, 1831

I have been kept here by rain for two days, by which I have profited to clear up the arrears of my correspondence to some extent. Yesterday I sent off a packet containing a very long letter to the Jardin and another for Madame Victor de Tracy. To-day I am writing the memorandum you asked me to draw up to serve as a *corpus petitionis* for my friends' efforts on my behalf. I shall try to arrange for it to leave here to-morrow, and during my leisure on the march between here and Ambala, where I shall have another chance of sending off a batch of letters, I shall finish discharging the rest of my epistolary debts, at the same time letting you know to whom I have written, for some letters from here get lost. Three days ago the letter-carrier was attacked and robbed in broad daylight near Panipat. There are other districts through which he has to pass on the way to Calcutta which are in a similar state of disorder. A poor naked fellow running on foot, loaded with a packet of letters, is an easy prey to brigands. Though I have two sentries on guard near my little tent all night, I consider myself very lucky every morning that I find the pillow on which I sleep still under my head and my shirt on my body. You would not believe the stories of robberies that I could tell you, for not long ago I did not believe them myself.

Six days of this life on foot or on horseback in the open air have completely restored me to health. I now enjoy as good health as I did in the hills. Like a true Moslem, I have taken a vow of total abstinence from spirituous liquors. I live very much like the

natives, and after several experiments I find that this regimen suits me best. I have a beard of three months' growth, three inches long. With my full Indian trousers, a green dressing-gown and a wide-brimmed black fur cap, it will make quite a tolerable Afghan of me if it is considered appropriate for me to undergo this metamorphosis at Ludhiana; it would certainly be a pretty comfortable one. In this country the dogs bark at a Christian. Buffalo and cows lower their heads and threaten him with their horns; horses on the road take fright and back up towards him or kick if he approaches them. But the bipeds of our species greet him with magnificent bows. It is for love of these salutations that Europeans in English India persist in wearing their national costume, which exposes them, by way of compensation, to being bitten, kicked, butted at, etc.

Adieu, my dear Father; remember me most affectionately to my friends. Tell Porphyre that I have already got a square metre of writing for him, and will add another between here and Ambala. Adieu once again; I embrace you with all my heart.

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(*Corr. ind.* II, No. LXIX)

To Lord William Bentinck, Calcutta

Karnal, February 4, 1831,
on the road to Ludhiana

MILORD,

It is out of discretion and consideration for your rare hours of leisure that I have delayed till now acknowledging the receipt of the letter which you did me the honour to write me from Keitah last December 26.

I had been mistaken enough to suppose the motives which had caused your Government consistently to refuse any assistance to those of its officers who had asked its permission to visit the Punjab and its dependencies to be of an entirely different

nature. I supposed it to be no more than the fear lest they might be badly treated on the other side of the Sutledje, and the national obligation of displaying resentment at the insult done to them, which had caused English citizens to be thus prohibited from travelling in the territories of your neighbour Ranjit Singh; and, as a result of this first error, I imagined that a foreigner, not possessing the same rights to the national protection of your Government, and whose fate would become a matter of complete indifference to it so soon as he went outside the provinces subject to its laws, might for this very reason receive more assistance from it in case of a similar request. I confess, milord, that I should never have conceived it possible for the English Government in India to be afraid of seeing the traveller whose projects it had thus nobly furthered requite this benefit by ingratitude and treachery, and indulge in intrigues directed against your power. If the Cabinet of some European Court, in its crass ignorance of the colossal structure of English power in India, desired to send secret political agents to the minor native princes who are your allies, especially in the Punjab, it seems to me that these absurd and disgraceful missions might find a more direct route through Russia and Persia than by way of Calcutta.

May I be allowed, milord, to express my gratitude for the special favour of which you have deemed me worthy. M. Martin has presented me to Ranjit's *vakil* with the formalities which you were so good as to prescribe, and I have no doubt that this kind step will assure me of a favourable reception from the Rajah.

Since I have received no letters from France since the Revolution, I cannot be thankful enough to you for the newspapers which you were so kind as to send me, for they are of inestimable value to me. Louis-Philippe well justifies the magnificent eulogy which you were good enough to express to me on the subject of your friend the Duke of Orleans. We were quite right in foreseeing a high political career for M. Victor de Broglie. His petty Ministry of Public Instruction leaves him plenty of time to preside over the doings of the Council of State and take a

most active part in the legislative reforms of which we stand in need. I have no doubt this was the reason why he was given this rather insignificant office.

I hasten to conclude, milord, by begging you to accept my assurances of the respect with which I have the honour to be

Your most humble and obedient servant.

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(C.F. XLVIII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Ludhiana on the banks of the Sutlej
February 25, 1831

MY DEAR FATHER,

Ranjit Singh is an old fox, compared with whom the wiliest of our diplomatists is a mere innocent. I expected to find at Ludhiana the passports promised me by his minister at Delhi, but they had not yet arrived. Ranjit wrote to the English political agent at Ludhiana (who is at present my host),¹ and while protesting what a pleasure it would be to him to see me, attempted to reopen questions which had already been settled, and so gain time. I might have forced his hand and simply gone my way, but since we were expecting a fresh messenger from him every day I was patient. At last the messenger arrived. The Rajah (or Maharajah, to speak more politely) is first sending the son of his prime minister to receive me at the frontier, that is, at Phillaur [Filoor], on the other bank of the Sutlej. Ranjit himself has fixed the length of every day's march for me till I reach the capital, where I shall implore him to deliver me from these tiresome honours. Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs, lies on my route, and my travelling companions will do the honours of it for me. From here to Lahore the country is simply a great plain under uniform cultivation, so there will be little for me to look

¹ Claude Martin Wade.

for on it, and I shall profit by this to spend as much time as possible with my spy. I call him my spy because one of his duties is to send the Rajah an express messenger every evening to inform him of what I have done during the day; whether I have walked, ridden on an elephant or on horseback; whether I have hunted or sketched; whether I am contented or dissatisfied, etc., etc. I do not know if any details will be spared him. You may therefore imagine me on the road to Lahore, starting on horseback at daybreak with my young escort riding near me, a troop of fine-looking horsemen following us, and the elephants and a few servants on foot bringing up the rear. At every halt the local notables come to pay me their respects and are presented to me by the minister's son, their respects including a few rupees. They will be most agreeably surprised at finding me content to touch their offering without putting it in my pocket. As I ride along I converse with my companion, he in Persian, I in Hindustani, though it is getting more and more Persian every day. I am increasing my establishment here by a chair and a carpet, for I must expect quantities of visits from people whose rank entitles them to remain seated in my presence, and not to walk barefoot on the ground. M. Allard writes letter after letter saying that he is burning to clasp me in his arms, and for my part I feel greatly inclined to like him. There is another European at Lahore named Ventura, an Italian who has served in our armies and has a great reputation for bravery and address on this side of the water. He is in command of Ranjit's infantry, M. Allard being at the head of the cavalry. His letters make me disposed to believe that he has some literary taste and knowledge.

You must ask for Elphinstone's *Account of Kabul* at the Library of the Institute; you would learn a great deal from it about the land to which I am going, for M. Elphinstone returned from his mission to Peshawar through the territory of the Sikhs, which Ranjit was far from having fully subdued at that time.

The two ex-Majesties of Kabul who are here received me with less ceremony than one of them, Shah Shuja, exacted from M. Elphinstone twenty-two years ago. These Afghans are splendid

fellows. I made a very long call upon Shah Shuja, for he charmed me by what he said about the marvels of his mountains of Kabul and his former paradise of Kashmir.

Morning of the 26th

I have just received the following lines from M. Allard: "Maharajah has just ordered the son of Fakir Aziz-ud-Din [Ezise-el-Din] to go and meet you with thirty horsemen. So we hope soon to embrace you. Young Fakir Shah-ud-Din [Schah-el-Din] will start at the same time as this note; but the horseman who will carry it to you will spend two days less on the road, so that you may be ready to cross the Sutlej when this young gentleman arrives at Phillaur, etc., etc." I am therefore holding myself in readiness to start to-morrow, and these lines are the last I shall send you from English India. M. Allard has a man of affairs here who speaks Hindustani and Persian equally well. I am taking him with me as far as Lahore in order to improve my pronunciation of the diabolical Arabic consonants which I shall require, for they are less common in Hindustani than in Persian, and less guttural in sound. I hope to write to you from Lahore before the fortnight is out and give a good account of Ranjit.

There was a little ice this morning, but these are the last cold mornings of the winter, and by ten o'clock the sun is already very hot.

I still have the same horse, which has carried me from Calcutta to the foot of the Himalayas and continues to justify the reputation for bad temper admittedly borne by chestnuts. But I have become more wily than it is, and it has not thrown me once since Benares. Those who know horses invent endless theories in which I have not the slightest belief. They say that an ordinary-sized Arab would find it hard to carry a man my size. Well, my *tattu* is much smaller than an Arab; it has often had hard work to do, and has never failed to rise to the occasion. Not once has its foot slipped since it had the honour to carry My Majesty. Never sick, never lame, never with a sore back. For the rest I consider myself a very good rider, though I admit that my style is not classic. I have

grown quite accustomed to my long beard and know nothing more comfortable; I verily believe that we are wrong to deprive ourselves of this ornament, a natural one if ever there was one, and that much of our toothache comes from the bareness of our jaws.

Lord Bentinck and Lord Dalhousie, the commander-in-chief, are at present *en route* for Simla, one at Meerut, the other at Karnal. The former's baggage is carried by three hundred elephants, thirteen hundred camels and eight hundred ox-carts. Two regiments, one of cavalry and the other of infantry, form his escort. While I am going to Lahore with one cart and a couple of camels.

Not a single French boat has arrived since the *Gange*, which left Bordeaux on August 11, nor has a single one left either. So I presume that the enormous stream of letters which I have written during the last six weeks and had sent on to Chandernagore, franked by the Chevalier Ryan, who has to forward them to M. Joseph Cordier, is held up by this dam, and has found no outlet towards Europe.

Impossible to mention politics, or I should never stop. I see Dunoyer and Chaper side by side in a list of prefects, and am writing to them both.

Adieu, my dear Father. Give affectionate messages to those of my friends to whom I have no time to write. Adieu. I am full of health, courage and hope. Write me good, long letters, and let Porphyre follow your example.

(C.F. XLIX)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Camp near Jullundur [Djelindhoeur],
in the Punjab, March 4, 1831

MY DEAR FATHER,

The day before yesterday I took leave of Captain Wade, my kind host at Ludhiana, and crossed the Sutlej, riding on my elephant and surrounded by a troop of Sikhs. A squadron of cavalry drawn up in battle array on the right bank of the river received me with military honours when I reached the farther shore, and escorted me to my tent, remaining under arms until the arrival of my *mehmandar*,¹ Fakir Shah-ud-Din, who soon arrived, accompanied by a number of officers. Wade had given me a lesson in Sikh etiquette, which I repeated without difficulty. Besides, the young Fakir did most of the talking; he used the most imploring forms of speech as he placed a gross bag of money in my hands, while part of his theatrical chorus was filing past my tent, each depositing a great basket of fruit or a pot of cream or preserves at my door. It was the Rajah who had sent me these presents. I begged Shah-ud-Din to write to him at once and express my thanks, while at the same time giving him to understand that it was no less than I expected of his hospitality.

In the evening I had another treat of a quieter kind. I went for a long ride along the solitary banks of the Sutlej without being pursued by the obtrusive honours I dreaded. No inquisitive faces appeared to spoil the landscape. I felt as free as I had done on the shores of Niagara. On my return to camp my *mehmandar*'s secretary came to take my orders for the next day. I fixed the time of our departure and the place where we were next to camp. Yesterday

¹ Jacquemont adds the note: "a Persian word, meaning literally: the guardian of hospitality". [Ed.—lit. guardian of guests.]

I spent the whole day's march on the back of an elephant, and alone, as I prefer. However, in this case solitude is a relative term, for I could not dispense with half a dozen servants on foot and as many on horseback. But such is the dignity of the ego in the East that it easily absorbs a dozen men and horses.

Since I had not invited Fakir Shah-ud-Din to accompany me on the march, he advanced with the squadron of cavalry some two or three miles to the rear. When he arrived in camp I at once received a message desiring to know when it would be convenient to me to receive him. He soon arrived, accompanied by the same compliments as on the previous day, a fresh bag of money and provisions of every kind. In the evening I called upon him, a courtesy which he had a right to expect, though perhaps not so soon, and he exhausted every superlative of Persian gratitude. It was not long before I withdrew, as I had come, to the sound of a flourish of trumpets. Had it not been for my long beard, which constantly reminds me that I am a serious person, my gravity would not have withstood the test of this music. . . . But I kept a straight face till I reached camp, when I shut myself into my tent to laugh at the sublime part I am playing and recover my ego. In speaking of oneself in India it is customary to say "we", already none too modest a formula; but since crossing the Sutlej I speak of myself only in the third person, as follows: "The *sahib* (that is, the lord) is not tired. The lord is charmed to see Your Lordship. Express the lord's respects to the king. The lord invites Your Lordship to mount upon the lord's elephant, etc." There are more "*seigneurs*" in a quarter of an hour of my conversation than in all the tragedies of Racine.

I arrived this morning and camped near this ancient city, travelling on the elephant, which I find more comfortable than horseback, for good reasons. I hardly know how to tell you the cause, but I will do so because I promised to be true to my nickname of Candide. The confidence of lofty souls meets with a poor reward at times. But with my certificates as *clarissimus et doctissimus vir*, I hope soon to have forgotten the dancing-girls of Ludhiana.

Fakir Shah-ud-Din came as he had done yesterday to ask how I was and offer me his compliments in the accustomed form—that is, another bag of money—accompanied by the same superlatives as before and endless quantities of provisions. At the same time he presented the governor of the city to me, a long greybeard of the old school who told me stories of Lord Lake's Mahratta Wars, when the Mahrattas took refuge in the Punjab. The governor was followed by an endless suite, and in order to get rid of them all politely I proposed to my *mehmandar* that I should take a ride round the town on my elephant, and told the greybeard that I was in despair at being unable to have him as my companion too.

Here I am, back again, since in French I may use the first person singular. Never was a man treated to a more discordant serenade than the charivari with which the artists of Jullundur are regaling me at the present moment. Not a single grating noise is lost through my canvas walls, and I am not hero enough yet to enjoy such music. I am spending the time writing to you, for I could not do anything better while waiting for this din to cease: since they are playing by the king's orders, the very least I can do is to bear it in patience.

"But", you will say, "how much is there in the bags of which you are making a collection?" A hundred and one rupees, or about two hundred and fifty francs. If Ranjit Singh feels obliged to treat his guests like this, I can understand why he is not anxious to receive visitors. I am wondering when and where this polite attention of his will stop. Perhaps at Lahore, but probably not till then. Now since it is six days' march from here to Lahore, before arriving there I shall have reaped a harvest of six hundred rupees, in addition to the three hundred and three that I have deigned to touch with my finger-tips since the day before yesterday. Till now I had always been infuriated by the slowness of travel in India, but Ranjit Singh has arguments that would reconcile me to the pace of a tortoise. You see, I have become as fond of money as if I were rich. By a refinement of avarice I regret that I have no more of those great Spanish double pistoles

which I brought with me to Calcutta. I would have offered them to the Rajah as my *naza* on the day of my presentation; instead of which I shall be obliged to be dull and give him a few Indian gold coins, to which he will pay little attention.

I do not know whether it is an optical illusion, but I am greatly pleased with the Punjab and its inhabitants. Perhaps you will say it is because I see them through a rain of gold; but the unsophisticated Sikhs of these parts have a simplicity and frank courtesy of manner which a European appreciates all the more after staying or travelling about in India for two years. Their fanaticism has died down, and such is their tolerance that Ranjit's grand vizier (the father of my *mehmandar*) is a Moslem and his two brothers, who are also Moslems, have an equal share in the Sikh prince's favour.

Lord William will soon be at Simla and Ranjit will send my *mehmandar's* father as his representative to present his compliments. Wade will escort the Sikh envoy from Ludhiana to Simla and then come to Lahore in his turn to present the Governor-General's compliments to the Rajah. I received another letter from Lord William before leaving Ludhiana, promising me the French newspapers for September. I hope to receive them at Lahore with letters from you, for I know that a boat which sailed from Bordeaux in September has just arrived at Bengal. So adieu till then, unless I resume this gossip beforehand and tell you about Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs, through which I shall shortly be passing.

Lahore, March 12

I hurried through the holy city in order to arrive at Lahore sooner. Yesterday I met M. Allard two leagues from the city with two other French officers, MM. Ventura and Court, who drove out to meet me in a four-horse barouche. We all leapt to the ground and I gave M. Allard a good hug. He introduced his companions and we all got back into the carriage. An hour later, after driving through a wild region covered, like the country round Delhi, with the ruins of Mogul grandeur, we alighted at

the gate of a delicious oasis. There was a great bed of stocks, irises and roses, with walks bordered by orange-trees and jasmine beside pools in which a multitude of fountains were playing. In the middle of this beautiful garden was a little palace furnished with extreme luxury and elegance. That is my abode. Luncheon was awaiting us in my sitting-room, served on solid silver. I spent the day wandering up and down the walks in my garden with my new friends, allowing myself to be stifled with endearments by them. You can imagine how keen was our mutual curiosity. . . . Evening arrived, however, all too soon. We had to part, for M. Allard and M. Court live more than two leagues away from my pavilion, and not much travelling takes place by night in the neighbourhood of Lahore. I was left alone among the enchantments of my new abode, which is exactly like a magic palace in the *Arabian Nights*.

During the evening my *mehmandar*, who had informed the king of my arrival, came to bring me His Majesty's compliments and some presents: exquisite grapes from Kabul, delicious pomegranates from the same parts, all the choicest fruits, and lastly, a purse containing five hundred rupees. A band of servants richly dressed in silk served a splendid dinner by torchlight. I was courageous enough to eat only what I usually do, some bread, milk and fruit. I am grateful to this diet, which enabled me to make the journey to Amritsar on horseback without the slightest inconvenience.

This morning I was awakened by M. Allard and M. Ventura, who were on their way to the King, having received a message at midnight summoning them for this morning. You should know that (for what reason I am unaware) I have gained such a reputation at Lahore that everybody is burning to see me, and Ranjit is not the least curious of all. It was to have a foretaste of this pleasure that he wished to see these gentlemen at such an unwonted hour. He knows they spent yesterday with me, so he will already be acquainted with me by the time I am presented to him. This will doubtless be to-day, or to-morrow at latest. Adieu; I leave you in order to add a still more Persian touch to the bare-

face compliments which I intend for him, as well as to those which I shall not spare myself in his presence. M. Allard told me just now that I know everything, have seen everything, and know the whole earth, and that, such being the conviction of the esteemed public of Lahore, I must carry things off with a very high hand, even with the King. It would be impossible to do too much honour to such a man as I am: that is to be my line. Adieu.

Lahore, March 16

I have spent a couple of hours on several occasions conversing with Ranjit *de omni re scibili et quibusdam aliis*. His conversation is a nightmare. He is almost the first inquisitive Indian I have seen, but his curiosity makes up for the apathy of his whole nation. He asked me a hundred thousand questions about India, the English, Europe, Bonaparte, this world in general and the other one, hell and Paradise, the soul, God, the devil, and a thousand things besides. Like all persons of quality in the East he is a *malade imaginaire*, and since he has a large band of the loveliest girls of Kashmir and sufficient means to pay for a better dinner than anybody else in this country, he is particularly annoyed at not being able to drink like a fish without getting drunk, or eat like an elephant without choking. Women no longer give him any more pleasure than the flowers in his garden, and for good reasons, and that is the most cruel of his ills. He had the decency to refer to those functions of whose weakness he complains as his digestion. But I knew what the word stomach signified in the mouth of the King at Lahore, and we discussed his malady exhaustively, though in veiled terms. To show me what good reason he has for his distress, the day before yesterday, in the midst of his whole court—that is to say, in the open country, on a beautiful Persian carpet where we were squatting, surrounded by a few thousand soldiers—lo and behold, the old *roué* sent for five young girls from his seraglio, ordered them to sit down in front of me, and smilingly asked me what I thought of them! I said in all sincerity that I considered them very pretty, which was not a tenth as good as what I really thought. He made them sing

a little Sikh tune *a mezza voce*, which their pretty faces enabled me to find pleasing, and told me that he had a whole regiment of them and sometimes amused himself by mounting them on horses and making them ride; and he promised that I should review them.

Though he has had ten years' experience of their devotion, loyalty and uprightness, he is often rather suspicious of the four Frenchmen (two of whom, I may say, are Italians) who are in command of his armies and have trained them on European lines till they are very well disciplined. He is sometimes visited by doubts as to whether they may not be English or Russian, and though the poor devils are very well paid and not badly treated, they have to walk very warily in order to preserve his confidence. In my conversations with him I was careful to act up to the semi-official character indicated in my English introductions, and with a pagan like Ranjit this is the best of all titles to consideration. I spoke in the highest terms of the power, good faith and pacific policy of the Calcutta Government, and when I had finished, Ranjit said that the Governor-General and he were two hearts in a single body. On the whole I am extremely pleased with him, and when I am not at court he speaks of me with the highest praise. Yesterday he referred to me in my absence as a demigod, and was particularly funny at the expense of one of the noblemen at his court, who wished to bring me some cure of his own for a cold which is nearly making me sneeze my head off all the time.

Yesterday I had a prescription written out in Persian and sent it to the Rajah with a few fairly harmless drugs, for which he had been badgering me day and night. Note that he takes good care not to use them himself, but will amuse himself by dosing his friends and servants with them. To-morrow he will tell me a hundred lies about the effect they have had on him and ask me for some more.

Nothing could be funnier than the rumours that are rife in the city about my interviews with the king. He is careful to report them to me in person, and is the first to laugh with me over them, though . . . he probably takes me for an English spy. However, he seems reassured with regard to my nationality. When I left

him after my first audience he exclaimed that I was certainly not English. An Englishman, he said, would not have changed his position twenty times or used so many gestures in speaking; he would not have spoken in such a variety of tones, now high, now low; he would not have laughed when occasion arose, etc.

I am to go to Kashmir, I am to go wherever I like. The king will have me guarded everywhere. I shall enjoy the same security as in the English possessions.

This model Asiatic king is no saint: far from it. He cares nothing for law or good faith, unless it is to his interest to be just or faithful; but he is not cruel. He orders very great criminals to have their noses and ears cut off, or a hand, but he never takes life. He has a passion for horses which amounts almost to a mania; he has waged the most costly and bloody wars for the purpose of seizing a horse in some neighbouring State which they had refused to give or sell him. He is extremely brave, a quality rather rare among Eastern princes, and though he has always been successful in his military campaigns, it has been by treaties and cunning negotiations that he has made himself absolute king of the whole Punjab, Kashmir, etc., and is better obeyed by his subjects than the Mogul emperors were at the height of their power. A professing Sikh, though in reality a sceptic, he goes to Amritsar every year to perform his devotions, and, oddly enough, visits the tombs of various Moslem saints as well; yet these pilgrimages do not upset any of his more strait-laced co-religionists.

He is a shameless rogue who flaunts his vices with as little embarrassment as Henri III used to do in our country. It is true that between the Indus and the Sutlej this is hardly looked upon as even a peccadillo. But what gives shocking offence to the public morality of these good people is that, not content with the women of his own seraglio, the king frequently indulges his fancy for those of other men's, and, what is worse, for public women too. Regardless of the mystery with which Orientals, even of the lowest class, surround their affairs with women, whether venal or not, Ranjit has frequently exhibited himself to his good people of Lahore with a Moslem public woman, indulging in the least

innocent of sports with her on the back of an elephant. Though only fifty-one, he is now reduced to the shameful substitute which is the practice of aged libertines, and complains of this quite shamelessly.

He is now ready to leave Lahore; he is sending M. Ventura towards Multan with ten thousand men and thirty cannon to levy tribute in the remote provinces of his empire, and M. Allard will probably be sent in another direction soon on the same errand. Ranjit will devise some similar occupation for himself, for he is a Bonaparte in miniature, incapable of staying in the same place. In a few days' time we shall all move off from Lahore. At my farewell audience I shall receive yet another present and a robe of honour, in the shape of a very fine dressing-gown made of Kashmir shawls. I mean it to be yours, father dear, for the great days of your *Essences réelles*. My portable bank has grown much heavier owing to His Highness's rupees; I have enough to make the journey to Kashmir and stay there for four months without making fresh inroads upon my wretched little balance in Calcutta. In any case M. Allard is opening me an unlimited credit in Kashmir itself, after which, on my way back to Simla, I shall probably have to travel through certain districts of Kanawar, the king of which is a friend of mine, as you know, and will gladly lend me a few hundred rupees if some unforeseen accident were to cause me to reach his dominions without any money. Like a prudent fellow I am writing to Kennedy and Murray (the political agent at Ambala) to warn all the hill rajahs subject to their control that in six months' time I shall be knocking at some of their doors. The first I shall honour with my favour will probably be the one at Bilaspur.

Yesterday our fellow-countrymen, whose guest I am, gave the most amatory (*galant*) of entertainments at my palace—for a palace it is—with an accompaniment of Kashmiri dancing and singing girls, etc., etc., one of whom would have passed as very pretty, or even lovely, in any country. I do not know how it came about, but in the half-dark, while the servants were lighting up the saloon, I found myself alone with this Opera-ball princess.

My hosts had slyly retired into the garden with the rest of the band—slyly, but charitably too. They have the same ideas of hospitality as Kennedy had at Sabathu. At dessert I forgot my frugal habits for a moment in order to drink M. de la Fayette's health in a glass of champagne, a very funny thing to do at Lahore.

The general's flag has had quite a success in this country. Eight years ago M. Allard caused it to be adopted by the armies of which he is in command, but the Sikhs, good worthy people, saw nothing odd about that. Ranjit only knows that it was Bonaparte's standard, and he likes to flatter himself that he resembles him.

At last I have received a letter from the Jardin des Plantes, and the first one at that! It is dated May 19, 1830. It acknowledges the receipt of my Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5, approves what I have done and what I intend to do, and informs me that from January 1, 1830, my grant has been increased by two thousand francs. It is, moreover, couched in most kindly and friendly terms, signed by Cuvier, Cordier and Jussieu, and forwarded to me by MM. Eyriès frères, merchants at Le Havre, who remind me that they are the agents of the Jardin, and offer me their services if they can be of any use to me. They would have done far better to send me a letter of credit for two thousand francs a year on some good house in Calcutta, for the Jardin does not seem to have taken any steps to authorize M. Delessert to send me any supplementary credit. However, I know that the money is at my disposal somewhere and belongs to me wherever it is, and I shall find means of drawing upon it when necessity arises. I am answering the gentlemen at the Jardin to-day, and MM. Eyriès too.

For four months at least it will be difficult for me to write to you, so do not be uneasy if you have to wait for some six months after this letter. Tell yourself that I am going to the earthly paradise, with ample stores of health. Before the month is out I shall be breathing the healthy air of the hills, which I shall not leave till winter is beginning on the plains of Hindustan. Adieu then, my dear Father, adieu. The only sorrow I feel is at having been

so long without news of you. I embrace you and Porphyre with all my heart.

I had my farewell audience with Ranjit Singh to-day, which I attended in company with M. Allard. For the last time I spent a couple of hours in conversation with this extraordinary man. He gave me the *khilat* or robe of honour, and of the very finest quality, too, valued at five thousand rupees, or twelve thousand francs. It consists of a pair of magnificent Kashmir shawls of a deep purplish shade (*lie de vin*), two others of less exquisite quality, and seven pieces of silk or muslin, the latter extraordinarily beautiful: in all eleven pieces, which is the most honourable of numbers. Add to this an ornament in the style of the country, in badly cut precious stones; and in addition to the value of this present, a purse containing eleven hundred rupees, which, added to the previous ones, makes two thousand four hundred, that is to say, more than a year's grant from the Jardin.

Nor is that all. The king is going to give me men to take care of me, foot- and horse-soldiers to watch over my safety, one of his secretaries to write to him on occasion, camels to carry my tents and all my baggage to the foot of the mountains, and lastly, porters to do this when the pack animals can go no further. Finally—for I could go on saying “finally” till to-morrow—at the salt mines where I shall arrive in some ten days' time I shall receive a purse containing five hundred rupees, and in Kashmir one containing two thousand.

And last of all, if I fancy anything in Kashmir, the king presses me to let him know, so that he may gratify my caprice.

It goes without saying that we parted excellent friends. What I had feared was that I might be detained longer at Lahore or in the Punjab, and as a matter of fact the minister did come and ask me whether it would be pleasing to me to accompany the king on a hunting expedition on which he is going in a few days' time, and the enquiry was made in a way that called for an answer in the affirmative. But from the very first I have carried things off with a very high hand in dealing with Ranjit, and my answer was a blunt and uncompromising “No”, uttered in such a way that

my diplomatist did not press me. M. Allard had been condemned several times to the honour which the king desired to do me, and congratulated me heartily upon having escaped it.

Ranjit asked me whether I should continue to wear European clothes and I said yes, since he showed them so much honour. I shall only lay them aside on my way back from Kashmir to Simla, if I manage to pass through independent Tartary.

Now it is M. Allard's turn. He is going through my household and stable, adding whatever he considers necessary for my convenience, and I simply cannot say him nay. I shall carry away charming memories of Lahore.

I should be so glad if you could help me to discharge my debt to M. Allard. He has a young brother of my age who was in the French service. He sent for him fifteen months ago to take service under the Maharajah, with a view to succeeding to his own post later. But the climate suited his brother so badly, even in the very first year, that M. Allard sent him away this winter. This young man is now in Calcutta, on the eve of sailing for France. What will become of him there? As a claim upon the favour of the Government I think he might well cite his brother's honourable and distinguished service in far-distant Asia and the reputation he has earned for our nation among a people which was almost entirely ignorant of it before. I will write to our friends to give him their support and Porphyre will do all he can to help him.

Adieu, my dear Father; it is midnight and I am dropping with sleep. My next will be from Kashmir.

You may lay stress upon Ranjit's Kashmir shawls in order to stimulate the good-will of those charitable feminine souls who might be willing to sign their name in the blank spaces of a certain legal document which you gave me on my departure. Adieu, I embrace you.

23

(C.F. LI)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Camp at Pind-Dadan-Khan [Pind-
aden-Khan], amid groves of pome-
granates and flowering orange-trees,
under some great mulberry-trees
April 6, 1831

MY DEAR FATHER,

It is very wrong of me to write to you this evening, for work, of which I am by no means short, ought to come before pleasure; but I am so badly bruised by a very recent fall from my horse—and a monstrous bad one—that I am indulging in this pleasure as a sick man's whim. I left Lahore on March 25, arriving by the 30th on the banks of the Chenab [Tchinab], or Acesines, at Ramnagar. On April 1 I crossed this river opposite Qadirabad [Quadabad], fifteen miles to the west of Ramnagar. Rajah Gulab Singh, whom the King had charged to receive me at Pind-Dadan-Khan, had come out three days' march to meet me. He is the greatest lord in the Punjab after Ranjit Singh. I presume you are weary of the honours with which I am received, so I will spare you all the details of Sikh courtesy observed by Gulab Singh in the morning. In the evening I went to call upon him in state at his camp, where he was awaiting me surrounded by all the pomps of his little court. We exchanged embraces for about a quarter of an hour, till we had nearly stifled each other—going so far as literally to lift each other off the ground; and since I found him a good fellow, who understood my Hindustani very well at once—for I have been giving a markedly Persian and Punjabi tinge to it for a month past—I remained talking with him till nightfall.

The Rajah returned my visit on the following day at the next halting-place, and in addition to the presents he had given me

on the previous day in the King's name and by his order, he gave me a double-barrelled gun made in the hills after an English model. I should have preferred one of his long matchlocks as a curiosity, but he considered his double-barrelled gun a masterpiece of Himalayan industry, though, as you shall see, it is not a brilliant one. Yesterday morning we crossed the Jhelum, or Hydaspes, and camped here. I spent the evening with my friend the "rose-water lion" (for such is the meaning of Gulab Singh: *gul* means rose, *ab* water, and *Singh* lion),¹ who is a soldier of fortune, a sort of usurper. I am sure I should not like the legitimate rajahs of Jammu [Djamou], Kangra and other hill principalities which Ranjit has transferred to Gulab, as much as I do him. He is a lion in war, but anything but a rose-water dandy; he is a man of forty, remarkably handsome and with the simplest, most gentle and elegant manners. This morning he took me to see some salt-mines situated some three leagues up among the hills. We started at dawn. The temperature was delightful. My barometers were being brought on behind me, so I set the pace by the slowest walk of my own horse, and did not spare Gulab Singh a single new plant. Any rock that aroused my doubts was examined in like manner, and such was my Punjabi eloquence on the subjects of botany and geology that my companion, delighted to learn the "Feringhee-Sanskrit" names of so many plants (that is, their Latin names, which I told him), started botanizing with me, and I owe him more than one plant which would otherwise have escaped me. A European must indeed be futile if he cannot succeed in interesting an Oriental enormously, unless he is dealing with a fool. The commonest details of civilization in Europe are a mine of wonders to these people; they will gladly listen to you all day if you are prepared to show them these treasures without grand phrases or metaphors. Two armchairs were carried on before us, and when we passed near a tree, or I had bundles of plants to press, the Rajah and I would sit down. If we halted for as much as a few minutes,

¹ *Ed.*—This is poetic licence on Jacquemont's part. Gulab Singh means "the lion of the rose".

Gulab Singh made a couple of his secretaries dismount, sit down behind us and hurriedly take down my words. So here I am being taken down in shorthand, like Cousin's metaphysics! Only I am more positive! What these people love beyond anything are European political statistics, about which they have no ideas: population, armed forces, taxation, the yield of every branch of the public revenue, the principles of our civil and criminal law, and lastly, the great results produced by the application of science to industry. I require no charlatanry at all here to keep up the character in which the Governor-General represented me to Ranjit Singh's envoy at Delhi. I have only to retail the most commonplace truths out of any almanac.

When we got to the mines, Gulab Singh began to appear extremely worried, and started telling me long stories of how the earth sometimes collapses and buries the workmen, about the heat, the bad smells, the filth, the winding tunnels, etc., etc., all leading up to his crowning argument: that no gentleman had ever gone down into such a foul place. All the same, he enquired what was my good pleasure. "To leave you here and go down alone", I replied. "But supposing the rocks were to fall down on you and I were not there, what could I say to the King?" exclaimed the good man. It appears that all the time I am under his charge he has to answer for me with his head. And so he accompanied me, not into one mine but into several, and quite forgot that it was beneath his rank. I taught him a bit of geology then and there, and to-morrow he will accompany me to another part of the mountains to continue the lesson. This very minute, to my very great satisfaction, he has sent me word that a route has been discovered by which I shall be able to ride all the way. This is a matter of importance to me, for I am rather bruised for walking. Quite a week ago I had a fall which might have been far more serious, for I fell under my horse, which had reared and fallen over backwards. On that occasion, however, I got off with being buried in the mire. I was expecting the same thing to happen to-day, but this time on sharp-cornered rocks, but I got my feet out of the stirrups and fell over backwards all by myself.

You may remember, father dear, having often gently reproved me for the unpleasant harshness of my manners and their repellent bluntness, and how I admitted these regrettable faults of my character. . . . Well, my temper must have changed very much for the better during the last few years since I left France, for I have received too many tokens of interest from too great a variety of people not to attribute some of them to qualities in which you used formerly to grieve at seeing me so deficient. Mere chance could not be so steadily in my favour; there must be a certain element of skill on my part in playing my cards well, which is nothing more nor less than a desire to please, unconsciously arising out of a kindlier disposition in general. Yesterday I was robbed by one of my servants, who acts as my treasurer because he knows how to read and write, and whom I believed to be more honest than the rest; but he pocketed a few rupees which I had ordered him to give to some boatmen. By chance I obtained proof of his knavery. Instead of flying into a rage and perhaps giving him a few cuts with a whip, as I should probably have done not more than a year ago, I spoke to him very gently; and though I punished him by fining him for the benefit of the men he had tried to cheat, and refusing him the time off for which he had asked, I made him do a thing which no Indian ever did before, and do it sincerely, too—I made him admit his fault and repent of it. Good-night; for if I were to go on, I do not know where this scandalous "*trumpetting-oneself*" would stop, and you would have good reason to take a dislike to me. Besides, I feel a terrible need to lie down on a bed.

Jalalpur [Djellalpoor], on the right
bank of the Hydaspes, April 11, 1831

God be praised, my dear father, not forgetting the blessings due to M. Augustin Taboureaux, M. Cordier of Chandernagore, Captain Wade of Ludhiana and M. Allard, who by linking together all their good offices have just enabled me to receive your No. 15 on the banks of the Hydaspes, together with the other letters that accompanied it and M. Beaumont's book under the

same cover. Lord William Bentinck had added a small contingent of the *Constitutionnel*, and several other friends in India their kind remembrances. This is a perfect treat, so to celebrate it I have ordered a whole day's halt. I shall spend half of it writing, and the rest in making a fresh survey of the low hills at the foot of which I am camping.

I had begun to despair of the fate of this packet No. 15, which had allowed itself to be outstripped by two later ones, 16 and 17, and I have absolutely no idea what can have caused the delay. The chain of our correspondence has so many links that often some of them elude me; it is always a minor mystery to me how it passes through them all. It falls on me from heaven, like manna on the Israelites, and if I were religious I should offer up the most ecstatic thanks as I pick it up.

Your letter is none the less welcome for coming late. The reading of it has caused me a nervous agitation which, though pleasurable, will be calmed only by a night's sleep. To answer it I should have to write twenty pages, for it starts a host of thoughts which I should like to tell you, and which you would find it equally pleasant to receive; but the day contains only sixteen hours.

You remind me of my early days on the march from Calcutta to Benares. . . . I examine myself from head to foot to find what there is about me that is admirable; and I cannot find it. I go back over the silence and monotony of those first days' march, but I cannot see the marvels in them that you do! Nothing seems to me so simple and natural as to botanize and geologize on the banks of the Hydaspes, or to gallop across the desert with my long-bearded escort. The further stages of my travels have a *crescendo* of charming surprises in store for you, and if your delight starts at *forte*, what will be left to celebrate my arrival at Lahore? You should start with *piano*.

You guessed when I should be at Benares. Last summer I spent among the lamas, and now here I am very near Kashmir, where I shall spend this one. There are four ways of entering it from the Punjab: through Jammu, through Bhimbar [Bimber], through



DANKHAR, SPITI

By kind permission of Monsieur Alfred Martineau

Mirpur and Punch [Prountche], and lastly, northwards through Muzaffarabad. Geologically it would have suited my convenience to follow the last of these, from which I could have made an expedition to the foot of the Hindu-kush [Hindou-Cosh]. But the leader of a band of Afghan fanatics, Sayed Ahmed, has been in occupation of it for some months; and though Ranjit Singh might have crushed him by resolute measures, he is content with slack ones, keeping him bottled up in a poor, hilly district. There Ahmed is pillaging and burning what few villages there are, and, if I were to fall into his hands, would treat me worse than a Moslem. I have had to give up this route, to my regret; besides, in the interests of my safety, for which he regards himself as responsible to the English Government, the King would not have allowed me to choose it.

The day before yesterday I took leave of Rajah Gulab Singh, as delighted with him as he was with me. A courier will leave my camp every day bearing him news of me, and I have promised to write to him occasionally in Persian *with my own hand*, which seemed to give him the greatest pleasure. We are good enough friends, and he is a good enough fellow, to excuse any breaches of etiquette that I may risk by not having recourse to the hand of a secretary. My safety, the distinctions which are lavished upon me in this country and the facilities granted me for travelling in it all have as their foundation people's sense of the consideration attaching to my name here, and I must neglect no means of maintaining and increasing it. Gulab Singh can neither read nor write, and has small respect for this talent, an ordinary one in a man of the middle class, whose profession and means of livelihood it is; but for a gentleman, and, what is more, a Feringhi gentleman, it is a talent worthy of admiration in his eyes.

I shall proceed with my ten camels—that is to say, the King's ten camels—as far as Mirpur, where they will be replaced by mules for carrying my baggage, which I shall lighten a little. At Punch the mules will be replaced by porters. I have none of the trouble of making all these arrangements. It is my *mehmandar*, Sheikh Badar Bakhsh [Bodder Box], who looks to it all and sees

to everything, being provided with firmans from the King. Every village sends fowls or kids, butter, milk, eggs and flour to my camp. My cook has brought me no bills since Ludhiana, and when I have eaten my fill, there still remains enough for my men to feast like princes. Wade writes from Ludhiana that Ranjit has written to him about me, and that of all the European gentlemen he has seen, he has liked none so well as me. He proves this by the attentions he lavishes upon me.

M. Ventura is marching in the direction of Multan with ten thousand men to receive the tribute of the southern provinces of the Punjab; M. Allard imagined for a moment that the Maharajah intended him for an expedition into the mountains against Sayed Ahmed. He is camping on the Acesines, and flattered himself at first that we might perhaps meet again in Kashmir; but the letter which I received from him by messenger this morning destroys this hope. He has been splendid to me. Every day I discover some fresh attention which he has arranged for me without my knowledge. Since the men forming my escort belong to a cavalry corps of which he is in command and in which he alone is responsible for all promotions, you can easily imagine that I am well guarded. The lieutenant of my troop stands a good chance of becoming a captain (*rissaldar*) if he takes back to his general a satisfactory certificate of good conduct from me, and he will certainly get one.

I have firmans from the Rajah to safeguard the collections which I shall despatch from Kashmir to Ludhiana as I go along, from whence Wade will forward them under similar protection to Delhi.

I do not know by what route I shall return from Kashmir, but I shall be writing to you more than once before thinking of coming back, and shall keep you constantly informed of my projected marches as soon as I have decided upon them.

My purse—a base thing, no doubt, but the most necessary of “metals”, as they say in Haiti, for travelling—is thoroughly well filled. I am carrying a thousand rupees with me (a hundred louis), and I have four thousand on which I can draw in Kashmir. This is the present given me by Ranjit Singh—exactly two years of

my ridiculous grant from the Jardin, before the extra two thousand francs which have been allowed me from 1830 onward. I have a balance of about six thousand francs in my banker's hands in Calcutta, to which I must add the above-mentioned additional grant for the years 1830 and 1831, making ten thousand francs.

I have no fear of being robbed, for apart from the fact that six guards stand sentinel to guard my camp during the night, every district through which I pass is held responsible for any accident that may happen to me. Everything, down to the progress of the seasons, is in my favour. In ordinary years the south-west monsoon is devastating the Punjab with its blazing heat by this time. During the early days of March, 1663, Bernier wrote every morning that he would probably die during the day; yet this year the atmosphere is often cooled by storms, which are more frequent than usual at this season. So far it is no more than very hot, and in five days' time I shall enter the hills at Mirpur, after which I can laugh at the summer monsoon.

You speak contemptuously of thunder and storms in Europe as compared with those in India. They are terrible in the Himalayas, it is true; for instance, this morning I was visited by one whose stupendous proportions suggested the neighbourhood of that great range. Yet it was in Europe, among the Alps below Mont Blanc, that I saw the finest spectacle of this kind. Elie de Beaumont was one of the party, and has certainly not forgotten it.

As a proof of my filial piety I have just changed my clothes, and I drink your health in a glass of punch which will do no harm to my own. This is so as to keep out the damp, of which I have accumulated a goodly store this morning while galloping for three hours in a downpour at the end of this day's march. It is on these occasions that my so-called Persian horse's sturdiness reconciles me to its base character. I have several times had thoughts of putting it on the retired list for its vices; but in spite of all its tricks, it has not succeeded in throwing me since Benares; it has never once missed its footing or gone lame, and will probably carry me as long as I am travelling on dry land, always excepting in Kashmir, where its sudden frights, plunges and fits

of obstinacy might throw it down to the bottom of some precipice, carrying me with it. In Kashmir, regardless of price, I shall buy the best *ghunti* [*ghounte*] in Tibet (*ghounte* is the name of the marvellous breed of hill ponies). I shall use it not only for this campaign, but also for the one that will still remain to be made in the Himalayas to the east of the Ganges, if the Minister of the Interior approves of the plan I have set forth in my memorandum. If not, I shall present it to Kennedy or to Lord or Lady William Bentinck, and it will be no ordinary present.

There are few people whose acquaintance I have made in India with whom I have not kept in touch to some extent, less often than I should like, for lack of leisure; but there are so many of them! I am the only person of our nationality who has come within the ken of this little English society which has been transplanted to India to govern it. Wherever I go, I am necessarily a little event which everybody remembers, whereas my own constant changes of scene leave no such lasting impression of their faces in my memory. There are many, however, whom I shall never forget. My previous letters will have said enough on this score. . . .

24

(C.F. LIV)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Camp at Jalalpur, on the banks of the
Hydaspes, April 11, 1831

MY DEAR PORPHYRE,

Packet No. 15, which I had thought lost, for I received Nos. 16 and 17 four months ago, arrived this morning with Beaumont's book. I have read some acres of writing which were carefully packed up with it, besides what had been added to this post by various friends in India. I have written the ten letters that you will find enclosed in this, and you can easily imagine

that I have had enough for to-day. However, I want to finish with them, so as to be able to devote my undivided attention to my rocks to-morrow. All the worse for you then, for, coming last, you will have the smallest share.

You are perfectly right to oppose the publication of any portions of my letters. It is impossible for them to have been written anything but too carelessly to please anybody but friends. I feel that Father has been entirely convinced by your objections to this premature, not to say indiscreet, publication.

In writing to this person or that to-day, I have tried to forget what you tell me about how you all pass round the letters you have received from me. The thought of this would have checked my pen, or at any rate would have prevented it from flowing over the paper with such abandonment as to blacken fifty-eight sheets in a day, as I have done. However, chance will have done me a good turn sometimes. For instance, in my letter to Father from Lahore, I remember having let slip some improper confession or another which will have prevented him from showing it to many people. I know how to talk to one person alone, and am very fond of doing so, but with three people it is quite a different thing, and the same is true of writing. If I am to say what I think, without any nonsense (*sans blague*), I must feel sure that I shall be read only by the person to whom I am writing. But what you ask of me, old fellow—and it is not much to ask, my poor Porphyre—is precisely a little friendly word and a touch of nonsense (*blague*). But one cannot write in that strain to order, and that air is one I cannot play to-day. But when I feel in the right mood, I will think of you, and since I always have pen, ink and paper at hand, you shall be treated to exactly what you want. . . .

I am dropping with sleep. Adieu, then, my dear old fellow; I love you and embrace you with all my heart.

25

(C.F. LV)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Camp at Nar, near a little village in
the forest, among the mountains on
the way to Kashmir, April 20, 1831

It costs me an effort, my dear old fellow, not to swear on paper, but I jolly well make up for it in the air: for really, this roving life sometimes exposes those addicted to it to such a complication of annoyances that what they want to do is to sit down on the first rock they come to, fold their arms and damn heaven and earth. For the last five days, quite legitimately (if our Liberal friends have not struck this word out of the dictionary)—as I was saying, quite legitimately, I have never once ceased to be either in the vilest of tempers or positively rabid. This has been since I entered the hills. I ought to have found a team of mules and porters there, ordered for me by the King long ago; but the power of a sovereign in Asia decreases at least as the cube of the distance from where he is. The result is that at Sukhchanpur [Soukchinepoor], on the banks of the Jhelum, my last halting-place on the plains, people were already saying that they did not care much for the King's orders, and would take none but those of his elder son, their Dauphin. The *thanadar* (mayor, or commandant) retired to his little mud fort with a few wretched brutes armed with matchlocks, and threatened to fire on my cavalry if it insisted upon having all that was due to me. The surrounding villages suffered for the rebellion of the most important place. My men went off marauding and helped themselves freely after taking my share.

At Mirpur, where I ought to have found mules and porters, nothing was in readiness. I needed forty men. Every day they were supposed to be coming, but after three days none had been

collected. I abused my *mehmandar* and the lieutenant in command of my escort and accused them of slackness and laziness; but they excused themselves by attributing these delays to the petty hill chiefs' utter insubordination to the King, and the habitual state of rebellion of their wretched subjects against these chiefs. When my men shouted at them too loudly the people of Mirpur, who also have their own little mud fort, threatened to retire into it and shut the gates. If my friend Rajah Gulab Singh had not been six days' march away, I should have written to him immediately and called upon him to send me three or four hundred regular infantry, so as to make an example of the place and give a hundred lashes to the gentlemen of the General Staff at Mirpur; but this would have meant binding myself to stay there a dozen days, and the place was utterly devoid of interest. The thermometer went up to 34° (93° F.) every day, so yesterday morning, seeing some thirty porters there, I made them load themselves up with the most indispensable portions of my baggage, and leaving my two officers behind to deal with the situation as best they could and see to the transport of the rest, I went on ahead. I arrived with all my men at the place near the banks of a river where I meant to camp, but found nothing there to receive me but the sun, blazing monstrously. At last the poor devils straggled in one after the other at intervals of a quarter of a league, and towards four o'clock in the afternoon I had breakfast. I had now entered the territory of Gulab Singh, where I had been promised wonders and miracles. The chiefs from a neighbouring fort came to make their salaams. To listen to them, mules and porters were as plentiful as rain in their mountains; yet nothing descended upon us during the night but endless quantities of oxide of hydrogen, and far from swelling in the rain, my nucleus of men from the day before melted in it like salt. This morning, when I enquired whether fresh porters had arrived, I was told that those of yesterday had decamped. I gave orders that my twenty hill soldiers, only ten of whom had arrived on the previous day, should be sent to look for them; but if the porters were made of salt, the soldiers were made of sugar, for not a trace of them was left after the rain. The rest of

my caravan, which was dragging along with the donkeys they had seized by force, was at the last gasp. I took your spy-glass and scanned the horizon in the hope of finding some village towards which I could turn my course, or rather, where I could make a slave-raid, for what I needed were porters: but there was not the slightest trace of smoke, except on the opposite bank of my torrent, which the storm during the night had rendered impassable. At last, however, some twenty of my previous day's Kashmiris were dug out from among the long grass where they had been hiding, and leaving my stout *mehmandar* behind to play Prometheus and create men in the desert to provide transport for half my baggage, which was lying dismally on the bank of the torrent like the remains of a shipwreck, I pushed on, followed by a small column carrying the most necessary portions of it. And so I am writing while I have breakfast, though it is not yet noon, for I have been so far out of my way and have been climbing about so much to right and left in the mountains that I have arrived after the first detachment. Here I can wait. My cook has forty eggs and flour and rice in proportion; there are a few fields of green wheat for the horses round about the hamlet; I have a tent, my chair, a table and, as you see, ink, pens and paper. The place is sufficiently high up to be no worse than very hot, and I am leaving my rearguard to the grace of God. As for the hill soldiers, with their matchlocks, sabres and shields, a few are re-appearing here as a sample of the rest, and have just told me that they have had nothing to eat since the day before yesterday, that is to say, since being what is here called "on service" with me. I drove them off like dogs, and the spokesman does not know how very near he came to getting a few kicks in the seat. To any orderly mind, but especially to a naturalist, who can only find his way about by the aid of method and logical and ingenious classifications, the general scramble, the "go where you are shoved" attitude in this country, which affects things and people alike, is truly upsetting. When I left Simla last year on my way to Tibet I asked Kennedy for only two of his Gurkhas: these two men, disciplined by European training, drilled my band of porters,

sometimes numbering as many as sixty, as if they had been a ship's crew. One of them would have been enough. Why have I not a squad of them with me here! They would do more work and spare me more annoyance than all the rabble on foot or on horseback with which I am saddled. Kennedy did offer me some, to be sure, but it would have been against the rules, and I gathered that he did so at the risk of getting into trouble with the Government. Besides, the King might have taken offence at my "invading" his territory with a few soldiers in the English service; so I refused the offer of that most amiable of gunners, and now I am sorry.

To put the finishing touch to this morning's doings—and note that I have no idea what may have become of my rear-guard, which may still be where it was yesterday, waiting for more men before advancing, as the *émigrés* did at the camp of Villejuif in March, 1815—well, to put the finishing touch to the morning's work, in order to arrive here intact I have had to give proof of my insolubility in water, for I received and pocketed a deluge or so on the way here. The tickets in one bag of rocks were reduced to a pulp by the rain. I shall have to look up their original order. It is the very devil. Then two of my mounted men's horses fell over a sort of precipice, from which they were hauled up again very lame. Mine has cast a shoe. It is really beyond endurance! The drinking-water is nothing but mud, a sort of chocolate revolting even to a traveller in India, who, after two years' wanderings such as I have had, ought not to be very particular about what he drinks. Adieu, my dear old fellow; I am going to take a little turn quite near my tent, and allow myself the satisfaction of swearing like a roll of drums. When you were dragging parks of artillery through the mud of Poland with oxen, perhaps you experienced a slight tinge of the vexation which is choking me at present. However, one must meet misfortunes with a smiling face, if not with a willing heart, be patient, untie strings without breaking them, put things down and not throw them. Good God! How strong the butter was in my omelette! Like Roquefort cheese! And when the sun does shine between two acts of the

deluge, how hot it feels in a flimsy tent where the air is stifling! Damnation! Here is one letter at least that Father will not be tempted to show to all our friends if you give it to him to read. To create a diversion, I will add an Indian oath [——!!] beside which all ours are very little boys indeed. Adieu.

Evening of the 20th, during dinner

My vexation had not yet reached its height when I scrawled you a long sheet of hieroglyphics this morning. But the sun shines more brightly after a storm: my reprimand to my *meh-mandar* produced its effect. Up he came with all the rest of my baggage, plus a dozen Kashmiris. He had taken them prisoner in the village, which had thought itself safe from my men's attacks because the torrent was impassable; but the fellow had crossed it, according to his own account, on inflated goatskins, and, having rushed the place with four soldiers, seized the dozen poor devils whom he is bringing me. During this time the vizier of a petty chief in the neighbouring mountains brought me ten of his own vintage, so that I am wallowing in plenty; and since I pay them, which they did not in the least expect, having been taken into custody in the king's name, and being nominally paid by him, the band surrounding me is jolly enough. It is the abomination of desolation to be short of the necessary men, for the lack of a few renders all those whom one has "collared" useless; so I treat myself to four or five hundred francs' worth a month, in order to earn a good reputation and find volunteers everywhere, for they make the best porters, as they do the best soldiers. If I were to make use of the royal licence granted me, the peasants would desert their villages on my approach and my men would find nothing to eat. This morning, as I was prowling about some way from the road among some very rugged and thickly wooded hills, I came upon three men hiding. I had been looking for something quite different. However, I thought them well worth capturing, so I said to one of my men: "Collar them!" They were peasants from a neighbouring hamlet who had run away to escape domiciliary visits. They looked perfect fools at being dis-

covered by chance. I promised them that they should be paid and not ill-treated, and they went off dejectedly enough to join the bulk of my band, for they had never seen Europeans, and did not put much faith in my golden words.

So, apart from all joking or metaphor, the horizon—I mean the sky above the mountains towards the plains—has cleared up quite well. I feel in far better spirits and quite disposed to finish reading Beaumont's book this evening. Since two narrow escapes from being struck by a thunderbolt, I prefer any sort of bombs to those of the Eternal Father, in the Himalayas at any rate, where they are charged with missiles and none too badly aimed. Last night I was whistling away on my pallet-bed, like people who feel scared at night in the streets of Paris, for the lightning was enough to singe my moustache, and I felt every moment as if one of the trees in the group under which I was camping had been struck. Besides, I was in the very tent where last year, in the Dun, two of my men were thrown to the ground while changing my clothes and paralyzed down the left side for a moment by the lightning, which had struck a neighbouring tree. I remember that I was no fonder of thunder at sea. When you are alone on the horizon during a storm accompanied by that sort of music, whether on board ship or camping in a desert, your chances of being struck seem greater, for you are the only one at whom Jupiter can possibly be aiming; and though he is a bit clumsy, even the most awkward have their lucky flukes.

Pray swear at my abominable writing, I give you permission. But excuse it, and this Kashmir paper too, for though one writes so badly on this slippery paper, the pen follows one's thoughts and is never outrun by them, and the "metal" (to use the Santo Domingan expression) that is most precious to me is time. You will see at least, old fellow, from the lack of order in these long pages, that though I am some thousands of leagues away, the thought of you is none the less vividly present to me, and one of the most pleasing illusions of my solitude is that of recalling memories of you and talking to you exactly as though you were here.

Adieu. In honour of the rain in which I have been so liberally and thoroughly soused this morning, I am going to allow myself a cigar after my dinner; but as I smoke I shall be reading Élie de Beaumont's treatise. Good-night, then, old fellow; I embrace you.

26

(C.F. LVI)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Camp at Barali (?) [Berali], in a little plain among the mountains, on the way to Kashmir, April 22, 1831

MY DEAR FATHER,

I may have made up my mind that I would never believe in adventures; but I am forced to yield to facts, and you shall now share in my conversion.

The Indians and Persians call Kashmir the earthly paradise. We are told that the road leading to the other one is very strait and narrow: the same is true, from all possible points of view, of the one leading to Kashmir. . . .

. . . I thought I had come to the end of my troubles, but that evening famine broke out in my camp. All my men came and told me that they were hungry and there was nothing to eat in the surrounding woods. This was the fault of the *mehmandar*, who had not warned them to bring food with them. I advised them to wait till the next day and ordered the soldiers to guard them well during the night.

But the night brought another deluge, and the soldiers, not believing themselves to be insoluble, abandoned their posts to seek shelter; so yesterday morning a fresh deficit was visible in my supply of porters. I acted as on the previous days and started first with a lightly laden band of porters. The distance was greater than usual, and the road very bad for one accustomed to travel

in Tibet. However, I arrived without accident to myself or those around me at Neki, a hamlet even more wretched than that of the day before. My horse had cast a shoe and was very lame, but I did not worry so much about this, for the path was such that we could only advance on foot.

Night was approaching and I was rather surprised at not seeing my *mehmandar* arrive, especially as the rest of my baggage, which had been set moving by his efforts, had found its way to camp. At last one of his servants came panting up with the news that his master had had a fall and broken his arm.

Contrary to the Asiatic rule of not advancing a step towards an inferior, I took a stick from one of my Kashmiris, and followed by several of his men and my horsemen, descended the mountain-side towards the wounded man to take him assistance. He was said to be lying in a valley two leagues from the camp, but I went on for three hours before I found him, at the risk of tripping and spraining my ankle over and over again. I must confess that his extreme timorousness disgusted me and almost made me regret having come so fast, if not so far. This cowardice was all the more striking in a man of his Herculean proportions. It was impossible for me to examine his injury thoroughly enough to know exactly what it was. The only good my visit did was to prevent him from making himself ill by drinking bad arrack [*rak*] in order, he said, to revive his drooping spirits. I made them smash the bottle. The night bade fair to be fine, so I left the injured man lying on a bed in the midst of the pine-forests, surrounded by some twenty servants or soldiers to wait on him and guard him. He was to be carried up here to-day on his pallet. I returned to camp very late by the most uncertain light of a moon which was still quite new, and by paths that were appalling. However, I made all my men take the same precautions as I did myself, and for half-an-hour we all dragged ourselves along the face of perpendicular cliffs without accident, flattening ourselves against immense walls.

I was worn out with fatigue, exhausted by the copious perspiration resulting from fifteen hours' march, and with no appetite

for supper. I had them make me a little bad punch, and since for the last four months I had entirely given up the use of spirituous liquors, it sent me to sleep at once, and may even have made me a little drunk in my sleep without my knowing it.

At last, this morning—for to-day is the great day—nobody was missing at roll-call—nobody, I mean, of my own band. At sunrise they moved on towards the top of the mountains in a good temper at the thought of breakfasting at the first halting-place, for we were to come on here to Barali (?), the first village after Mirpur.

I was marching on foot behind my lame horse, rather out of temper with the rocks, owing to the ambiguity of their character and lie, and meditating on the subject of my injured *mehmandar*, the difficulty of getting him to this village along such abominable paths, the impossibility of his accompanying me on my journey, and the tiresomeness of having to ask the King for someone to take his place, etc., etc., when I found myself, this time in company with my rear-guard, at the foot of a great mountain with almost perpendicular sides and a flat top, on the edge of which I could make out a fort. I was told that it belonged to the King and had a guard of three or four hundred soldiers under the command of a royal governor. And I did, in fact, see a number of very evil-looking fellows with matchlocks, sabres and shields coming down the only path that led to the top, and the only one along which it was possible to make one's way.

They salaamed and said they had come on behalf of their master to show me the way and look to the safety of my baggage. Their master, they added, was awaiting me on the plain forming the top of the mountain to offer me his salutations and a *naza* (a present offered by an inferior to his superior). There was nothing at all improbable in this report, so after an hour's stiff climb I came out on *terra firma* at the top of the mountain with my men. It was a nice smooth stretch of grass. The fort stood on a mound in the middle of it, and helped to make up a most picturesque landscape. There was no lack of large groups of soldiers with their oriental accoutrements, who lent the scene all the local colour

that the gentlemen of the *Globe*¹ could desire. I found my caravan resting beneath an enormous sacred fig-tree, the only tree in these strange regions. I ordered it to resume the march, whereupon my servants came up and said they were not allowed to do so, for the people in the fort had made them halt there.

A large number of these had approached, and crowded round my horse, which I had remounted, till they were almost crushing one another. But their only motive seemed to be curiosity, and the crowd parted at my command. It had swelled to such a size, however, that the men of my escort were almost lost in it. Impatient at this delay, I gave orders that the governor should be sent for as fast as possible. He soon arrived, surrounded by a fresh crowd of soldiers even more villainous-looking than the first, and so wretchedly dressed himself that I was obliged to ask Mirza which of these ragged beggars was the chief. Out of respect for the King, whose officer he is, I dismounted to receive his compliments, for he was himself on foot. He offered me a kid which my butler led away. I contained myself with difficulty till the end of his harangue, and then gave full vent to my indignation at his refusal to allow my caravan to advance. I apostrophized him violently, and asked whether it were true that he had dared to give such an order. Nial Singh [Neal-Singh], for such was the bandit's name, seemed a little taken aback by my violence, and without replying to my question offered to give me as many soldiers as I liked to guard my baggage. I said that he and I were the only inhabitants of those wilds, that I had no need of his soldiers, and that all I asked him to do was to order them to retire. He then gave me to understand that any such order from him would not be obeyed, and again pressed me to accept a guard from among his troops. I considered this prudent and accepted.

But my position was obviously becoming that of a prisoner. Mirza, my *jemadar*, now addressed Nial Singh only with clasped hands, and the latter stiffened his tone accordingly. Finally, after a long catalogue of all the injustices inflicted upon him by the King at the instigation of his minister Dhyān Singh [Theann-

¹ The organ of a group of Romantics.

Singh] (brother of my friend, Gulab Singh), he informed me with clasped hands—note that—and in the most humble and submissive language, that the custody of my person afforded him a means of forcing the King to make reparation for these injuries, so he would keep me a prisoner until justice had been done him, and I, my escort and my baggage were to act as hostages and security.

The fellow had got quite excited by this recital of his troubles: the only reward of his fidelity, he said, had been that Gulab Singh had tried to force him to surrender the fortress entrusted to his guard by the King. It was because he had steadily defended it against that lord that Gulab's brother Dhyān Singh, who had a post about the King's person, had thwarted all the King's orders that he should receive his pay. For the last three years he had been paid nothing; the best clothes he had were the rags which he showed me, and his soldiers were living on grass and the leaves of trees. . . .

I saw with secret annoyance—which you may be sure I kept to myself—the effect of this eloquence on the armed and starving crowd into whose power I had fallen. The leader's voice was often drowned in the general clamour, and the end of his speech met with by no means the smallest proportion of this threatening applause. As he listened, every man looked at the lighted match of his gun and shook off the ash. Several of the soldiers in turn tried to speak; but in a commanding tone I ordered this horrible rabble to be silent, after which I heard nothing but murmurs so feeble that the leader himself ventured to quell them. The calm indifference I affected and the ease and arrogance with which I spoke impressed the poor wretches. They were crushed by my disdain. They had probably never heard any rajah of theirs talk of himself in the third person, as I did. Ranjit Singh is the only person in the Punjab who does so, and while treating myself with such respect, I talked to them as to mere servants. By this manœuvre I succeeded in alienating most of them from their leader, whom I treated with equal familiarity, but in tones of kindly condescension. I led him under the shade of the great fig-tree which I mentioned before, in order to converse with him less

publicly. I made him sit humbly on the ground, whereas I had had one of my chairs arranged in readiness for myself. He seemed anxious to come to the point, but I called my butler and sent him for a glass of sugar and water, which took a long time to prepare. I complained of the heat and ordered another of my servants to hold a parasol over my head while another one fanned me with a fan of peacock's feathers. I made myself quite at home, dispensing with none of my ordinary requirements and even adding to them considerably, I can assure you, while I left Nial Singh sitting humbly on the ground, reflecting in silence on the magnitude of the crime that he might have contemplated committing, and the fearful extent of its consequences. I then explained to him under what auspices I had come to those parts, and the terrible vengeance which the King would not fail to exact for any affront that I might receive within his territories, as a means of proving to the English Government that it had not been done at his instigation.

The fellow protested that he had no criminal designs upon me, but had no doubt that on hearing I had fallen into his hands the King would pay him what he had so long owed him, in order to deliver me. I represented to him that after committing such an outrage upon the Ranjit's authority he would never be able to flatter himself that his pardon was sincere, but would pay for it sooner or later by a cruel punishment. In saying all this I did not talk as if I were threatening him, but as if I were speaking in his own interest, and this diplomacy was not unsuccessful. Nial Singh then proposed to let me go free, and keep only my baggage. I rejected this idea with arguments intended to make him more conscious of the distance separating us. "What!" I said. "Travel without my tents! Without my furniture! Without my books! Without all my clothes—I who change twice a day!" Such a proposal was absurd, impossible! I looked at my watch, told my butler it was time for breakfast, and ordered him to serve it without delay. I knew perfectly well that there was not and could not be anything ready, for my whole caravan had been taken prisoner and was under the guard of Nial Singh's men, before whom my servants were careful not to open any

of the packages. I ordered that some milk should be brought. The butler, at his wits' end, asked me where he was to get any, and where it was to come from. "Don't you hear", said I to Nial Singh, "that the lord wants some milk? Send to the neighbouring villages as quickly as possible, so that it may be brought him without delay." The brigand was a little flustered by this policy of mine, and so uncertain of himself that he sent a few of his minor brigands in search of the beverage which I had demanded. I watched them go, and when they were some hundred feet away I called them back and told my butler to explain to them carefully that it was cow's milk, and not buffalo's or goat's milk I required, and that they were to see the cows milked before their own eyes.

I was purposely getting these bandits into the habit of obeying me in unimportant details in order to make them easier to deal with in the important business which remained to be discussed with them, a moment which I was postponing by a number of devices, seeing that this sort of truce was all to my interest, for it enabled me to gain an ascendancy over Nial Singh. When I thought a favourable moment had arrived, I offered to give him a present and help him by saying a good word for him to the King. He had shown me so many royal warrants, which had turned out to be as worthless as *assignats*, that a fresh scrap of paper in my handwriting was hardly likely to seem a great addition to his wealth; and this was why I was the first to offer something more solid as well. He at once asked for two thousand rupees. Some of his men who had gathered round shouted: "No! no! ten thousand!" which brought them nothing but a contemptuous remark from me, to which none of them dared reply, and which seemed to embarrass them so much in the presence of the rest that none of them ventured to interrupt my conversation with their leader again. "Not ten thousand or two thousand, or even a thousand; for I have not got them. But in consideration of your unfortunate plight I will give you five hundred rupees." "Five hundred rupees!" he exclaimed. "What is the good of that? There are four hundred of us here, who have been starving

for the last three years! Two thousand rupees, or you will be kept here a prisoner!" Without appearing to take any notice of the alternative he suggested, I shrugged my shoulders at the absurdity of his demand and offered to let my treasurer convince him, and he eagerly accepted the proposal that he should see my treasure counted before him. I reproved him for this eagerness with lofty severity and contempt, as though what I had told him could possibly be untrue. "Asiatics", I said, "are miserable wretches who would perjure themselves for an *écu*; but have you never heard what the word of a Christian gentleman is worth?" And he begged pardon with clasped hands, protesting that he believed me, but repeating that five hundred rupees would not be enough for so many people.

I now changed the venue of our conference. Catching sight of a shady little valley, I told Nial Singh to come with me and continue it there, and I took good care to keep wanting something in my trunks, so as to be followed by all my baggage, and so prove to the brutes surrounding me that there was a limit to their leader's rebelliousness, and that I did not regard myself as in the least their prisoner. Twenty times I stopped to look closely at some plant, examining it through my magnifying-glass and making one of my servants, whose business it is, pluck it and press it in a book. Nial Singh had to answer my questions about their names and uses. These delays and my haughty manner obviously vexed the soldiers and put them in a bad temper, but they now kept silence.

However, I had greatly improved my position. This man who was holding me prisoner and had my life in his power was allowing me to promise him my protection. He complained that he had never been able to inform the King of his grievances, for Dhyān Singh intercepted his letters or prevented them from reaching the King. He begged me to write to M. Allard, asking him to be good enough to act as his channel of communication, and I wrote my friend an account of my adventure on the spot, while regretting that I could not describe the end of it. This letter was received with every demonstration of respect. The forms of

politeness in a brigand are always something. The idea of keeping me prisoner had been gradually abandoned, though I firmly repeated that I had not got a thousand rupees. I enquired about routes and distances, including that to the next village (where I am now), and asked what resources it would offer for my caravan, which had gone hungry for two days. I succeeded in sending my tents and household gear on ahead; I even manœuvred with a view to saving the five hundred rupees which I had originally offered with the knife at my throat. But I saw that the chief's unpopularity among his men was increasing to such an extent that to avert an explosion, which would have meant a general pillage of my baggage and perhaps a number of gunshots at close range, I yielded to the inevitable and told my treasurer with a gracious air to count out five hundred rupees to Nial Singh.

The rest of my adventure was merely comic. The chief brigand assured me that he was not taking this money from me, and did not even want to accept it unless I made a declaration that it was my good pleasure to give it him. The humility of his protestations almost made me want to laugh. In future, he said, he would be my servant, because he would have *eaten my salt* (a popular figure of speech in all the Indian languages); had it not been for his excessive poverty, he would have offered me a better *naza* than a kid, but that had shown me how submissive he was to all my wishes, and I knew how poor he was—I who was treating him so generously. . . . My servant had only to take a few rupees out of one bag and put them into a larger one to make up the five hundred rupees. He gave the bag to Nial Singh, who with a humble and supplicating air begged me to be pleased to touch this money, and then to touch his hand when he received it, in order to prove to him that this present was due merely to my goodness and satisfaction with his services. I consented—with my left hand—and when my brigand felt the finger with which I had touched the bag presented to him rest lightly on his hand, he prostrated himself and cried out that he was the most faithful, the most grateful, the most devoted of my servants, and if I would allow him to assume such a title, the trustiest of my friends. He

then said a few words to Mirza in the hope of getting a few rupees out of him, and my poor devil of a lieutenant, with clasped hands and a most piteous air, was pleading his very real poverty when I restored his confidence by telling the brigand in a commanding tone that he had eaten my salt and Mirza ate it too. I made them take each other by the hand to cement this friendship, as unreal as in a play, and took it upon myself to order my caravan to move on, with the words: "To Barali!" Nial Singh offered me fifty of his bandits as an escort to my men, which I prudently declined; I asked him for five and ordered him—for in words, at least, I was master and had hardly ever ceased to be—to send all the rest back into the fortress. On taking leave of me, which being interpreted means *on restoring me to liberty*, he asked me in a low voice for a bottle of wine, and I kept faith with him so well that, having promised it, I sent it him. However, I thought it would be too ridiculous to let such a villain drink my health in a bottle of my old port, so I sent him one of arrack from Delhi, which I use for the same purpose as spirits of wine.

The five bandits whom he had sent with me seemed very ill at ease on finding themselves in a minority among my band. They escaped while we were rounding a mountain, and, in collusion with a few others who had unlawfully smuggled themselves into our party, stole the skinny goat which one of my men was driving before him, and which would unquestionably have been the most expensive dish I should ever have tasted.

This village is exposed to attacks from Nial Singh when hunger brings him out of the forest; and though they know I have only three hundred rupees left, the scent of them might possibly attract some of his band here to-night. But my men are on their guard, and if they have the spirit, which I doubt, would be quite capable of driving off an attack, unless it were made by Nial Singh's whole band. I am writing to you with pistols on the table and some more at my bedside, and my gun leaning up against it. I have no doubt that if I were to bring down two men with my first shots, this would make a great impression on the minds of the rest, unless they were in an overwhelming majority, as they were this morning.

To-morrow I shall camp near a small town and be perfectly safe as far as Kashmir. I am congratulating myself upon this. There my caravan will revictual, and I shall send couriers by another route to inform the King of my adventure and demand reparation, besides letting M. Allard know that it ended amicably. Woe unto the most devoted of my servants, the trustiest of my friends, if Ranjit Singh instructs M. Allard to chastise him for his impudence! He stands a very good chance of being hanged on that sacred fig-tree which witnessed his treachery, and this would be the greatest service M. Allard could do him, for if he hands him over to the King he will only remain alive if he can survive horrible mutilations, and I hope M. Allard will do him this service. It is true that I have solemnly declared myself charmed to give him five hundred rupees, and it is true that I was charmed to get off with so little. My satisfaction, as you may well imagine, was merely relative.

I presume that, having got wind of my adventure, Badar Bakhsh will hardly arrive this evening (it is ten o'clock) and put his head into such a hornet's nest. But there is no other road for him to take, and lack of provisions may make it impossible for him to return to Mirpur. Nial Singh will make him pay dearly for his welcome if he catches him, for he is the confidential agent of Dhyan Singh, the author of Nial Singh's misfortunes. For the rest, he strikes me as being a fairly bad lot, and not much loss as a *mehmandar*.

I hope, my dear Father, that I shall not have to swell this letter, the first instalment of which is already a long one, with other stories of this sort. But after all, though in future you are bound to admit that there are such things as adventures, you see how little they amount to after all. This one has cost me fifty louis, but the Rajah gave me five hundred, so I am only staking part of my winnings.

I have nothing to reproach myself with in this business; the united prudence of humanity could not have averted it. Violence might have cost the lives of a few of the brigands, but it would have left my men not the slightest chance of escaping massacre.

I could do nothing but resort to diplomacy, and I consider that I got out of it pretty well, for I kept a handsome draft of two hundred louis on Kashmir, as well as the King's *khilat*, besides saving appearances so thoroughly that I feel sure my old school-fellows the Marquis of —, the Duke of — and the Prince of —, now high and mighty lords of great ability and the stuff of which ambassadors are made (which seems rather comic), would have done no better. But some day when I am with you again, and have returned to the monotonous round of a sedentary European life, I shall find greater pleasure in recalling these diplomatic reminiscences of my youth than their above-mentioned lordships will do in recalling their embassies. I envy them nothing: the wandering life, whose vicissitudes I have had to relate to you to-day, has pleasures too, even in the present, that are unknown in Paris. I give rein to my imagination and allow it to abandon itself to their charm, while my mind is constantly occupied with the subject of my concrete studies. Add a touch of philosophy—for which I do not consider myself much indebted to our friend Seneca—good health and excellent legs, and believe me, it is I whose walk in life ought rather to be envied. Adieu.

Camp at Kotli [Koteli], April 23

Well, I am rid of Nial Singh, and have no further reason to fear his night attacks! Why was it not written in the heavens that I should arrive in his territories a day earlier! He would have robbed me this morning, but at the present moment I should be making him disgorge what he had taken and seeing that he got two hundred lashes in requital of his good and loyal services. The reason is as follows: this morning, a little way from Barali (?), I met the army on its way back from Kashmir; and since it was impossible for two horsemen, and often for two men on foot, to pass each other on these paths along the face of a precipice, I sat down in the shade at the side of the road and reviewed two or three thousand men as they filed past me. The officer in command of them, Sheikh Nur Mohammed, dismounted and approached me respectfully, offering me a few rupees as a *naza*. I made him sit

down beside me on the grass without ceremony, and stayed talking to him for more than an hour. I described my discomfiture of yesterday, and wrote all essential details to M. Allard then and there, so that he might inform the King as soon as possible. Sheikh Nur Mohammed promised to give this letter to M. Allard in person when he rejoined him in camp in six days' time. On his way he will enquire whether Nial Singh has seized my *meh-mandar*, and, if he has, he will besiege him in his fortress. He offered to make this little siege in any case, so as to punish the bandit as speedily as possible. But I persuaded him not to, for I want the King to take the initiative in giving me the satisfaction which I expect. Had I met Nur Mohammed's army yesterday, I should probably have accepted his polite offer in order to have the pleasure of taking part in it.

This army is returning to Lahore in great discontent. The last *suba* [*soubah*] of Kashmir, who trained it, treated it generously, and it knows the King will pay it badly. Moreover, it is angry with him for the revolting injustice with which he has treated its former leader. Had it not been for a few companies which were once well-disciplined, and were marching among the horde of irregular Sikhs, my baggage would possibly have been pillaged. But once I had met the Sheikh, this alarming rabble became quite quiet and presented arms as it went past.

After the whole army had gone past, I saw by the side of the road the corpse of a man who, it seemed, had been hanged on a tree that very morning. I asked who he was and why he had been hanged, but all the passers-by seemed so completely indifferent to the sight that none of them knew any more about it than I did. The life of a poor man! How small a thing it is in the East!

One has to have travelled in the Punjab to realize what an immense benefit the domination of the English in India is to humanity! What misery eighty million men are spared by it! An enormous proportion of the population in the Punjab lives only by the gun; perhaps it is the most wretched element of all, and yet, in all justice, it should have no other right than to be

hanged. I cannot witness the hideous evils of such a system without ardently desiring to see the English carry their frontiers from the Sutlej to the Indus and the Russians occupy the other bank of that river. It is generally believed that that day will see a terrible clash between these two great powers, which will decide the fate of all Asia west of the Irrawaddy [Iraday], but I believe, on the contrary, that not till then will peace prevail throughout the whole of these vast regions. European civilization *deserves* to spread through the universe. In default of the *civilization* of the West, its mere *domination* remains an immense benefit to the peoples in other parts of the world, and it is probably the only one which the religious institutions of the East permit us to confer upon it.

Camp at Kahuta [Kohouta], valley of
Betar, May 1st

I have not made much progress during the last week, but both beasts and men stood in great need of a rest at Kotli, which offered none of the things that would have restored them quickly. I arrived at Punch on April 27 in a pitiable condition, spitting blood. I cut my malady short by a bold measure; I made them fish some leeches out of the rivers in the surrounding neighbourhood, and had sixty-five of them applied to my chest and stomach; to make up for this heavy loss of blood I had two sheep killed a day, and ate as much as I could, so here I am perfectly well again. It was probably a chill following on a forced march which had affected my chest; but how is that to be helped! There are marches during which one has to cross four torrents, in which the icy water comes up above one's waist. One is only too fortunate if one is not drowned.

The threatening horizon by which I was still surrounded on every side at Kotli now shows considerable signs of brightening. The day after to-morrow I shall cross the range separating the vale of Kashmir from this sea of mountains!

Some little way from the pass, it is true, there is a fort of the King's at Uri [Ouri], but it is too close to Kashmir, a main centre of his authority, for the *qiladar* (governor) to allow himself such

liberties as those which Nial Singh took with me. Besides, I have not a halfpenny left.

I wrote to the King from Kotli describing my adventure and demanding satisfaction. In a fortnight's time I shall receive his answer.

I also wrote about it to Wade, whom Lord William Bentinck is sending on a mission to Lahore to reciprocate the Rajah's compliments, a cargo of which the latter has just sent him to Simla. It is important for my safety on future excursions that my brigand should receive condign punishment.

Kashmir, May 15, 1831

At last I arrived, several days ago. The pass of Punch, though still covered with snow, was child's play to me. Last year in Tibet I several times climbed to almost double the altitude.

It is true that I again found persons in my path who cared very little for the King's orders, but their insubordination did not present any considerable obstacles. I arrived here on the 9th. The governor, who was informed of my approach, sent his boat and his officers to receive me two leagues from the city and conduct me to the garden which had been prepared as my abode. It is planted with lilac and rose-trees, not yet in flower, and enormous plane-trees. In one corner stands a little pavilion commanding the lake, and there I have taken up my quarters. My men are near at hand in my tents, which are pitched beneath lofty trees. Sheds are being hastily run up for my horsemen and their horses.

Had the governor of Kashmir been a great nobleman, I should not have hesitated to call upon him first, but he is a man of low extraction who is there only temporarily, so I have refused to pay him this mark of deference. For a parvenu he had a reasonably good disposition. It was agreed on the very first day that our interview should take place on the following day at Shalibagh,¹ the Trianon of the former Mogul emperors. It is a little palace, now deserted, but still charming by reason of its position and magnificent shady trees. It is about two leagues from my abode,

¹ *Ed.*—Shalimar Bagh, the Shalimar Garden.

on the other side of the lake. The Governor sent me his boat and a numerous guard which manned a flotilla, and I repaired to Shalibagh on my admiral. The Governor had given orders for a festival in honour of my reception. Fountains played in the gardens, which are thronged with people; the Sikh army in its splendid, picturesque costumes filled every avenue. Dancing and music only awaited my arrival to begin. The Governor rubbed his long beard against my left shoulder, while I rubbed mine against his right shoulder, we sat down side by side on chairs, the viceregal court squatted round us on the carpet, and after the usual exchange of stereotyped compliments the party began.

This insipid variety entertainment of song and dance which Orientals will watch with pleasure from morning to night is called a nautch. It is only at Delhi that it has any grace. There was nothing in the eyes of these Kashmiri beauties to compensate for the monotony of their dancing and singing; they were duskier—that is to say, blacker—than the choruses and ballets at Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana and Delhi. I stayed as long as it gave me any pleasure to look at the curious architecture of the palace, the varied, brilliant groups of warlike figures which thronged all round it, the colossal size of the trees, the fresh grass, the waterfalls, and, in the distance, the bluish mountains with their white peaks. . . . At the end of half an hour I took leave of my viceroy and returned home in the same order as I had come.

The walls of my pavilion were merely of lace-work. There was nothing to close it but shutters carved in open-work with infinite art. It was open to every wind, as well as to the curious eyes of the Kashmiri loungers who gathered round it in thousands in their little boats, staring at me as at a wild beast behind the bars of a cage. I had pieces of cloth stretched inside, which shelter me more or less from the wind and completely conceal me from public curiosity. The governor has sent me a large guard drawn from a semi-regular corps which is under his special command. There are sentinels posted all round the garden who shower their blows freely upon any indiscreet

persons who may approach it. I have to give these orders or I should not be respected! This charming place will serve as my dwelling-place, or rather headquarters, for the next five months. It occupies a fairly central position in this land. I shall leave the heaviest part of my baggage here and make a series of excursions into the surrounding country, now by boat, now on horseback or on foot, according to the nature of the places to be visited. The King's munificence has enabled me to face the expenditure necessary for the formation of great zoological collections. By the end of five months here I reckon that I shall have doubled the baggage which I drag about with me.

I was not absolutely exempt from fear in coming here. For some years past an Afghan fanatic, Sayed Ahmed, had been threatening Kashmir. But the day before yesterday a royal salute was fired from the fort and the governor sent me word that Sher Singh [Cheyr-Singh], one of the King's sons, had just had a battle with him near Mazaffarabad, in which he had perished with his whole army. Rumour adds that Sher Singh is coming here as viceroy. Though I have no cause to be anything but satisfied with the present Government, I look forward to the prince's arrival; he is a great friend of M. Allard's and cannot fail to treat me well. His authority will be far more powerful in these parts than that of the present head of the Government, and will protect me far more effectively on my excursions. For the rest everybody knows by now that I am not to be trifled with. A royal firman arrived yesterday announcing that, on hearing of my adventure at Tharochi [Toloutchi], the King has expelled Nial Singh, ruined him and given orders that if he shows himself at Lahore his nose and ears are to be cut off. Further, the same firman ordered the governor to send me five hundred rupees at once, evidently by way of restitution on the King's behalf of the sum extorted from me by Nial Singh. The terms in which the King refers to me in this firman breathe high esteem and genuine goodwill, and have produced a wonderful effect here. In a few days' time I shall write and thank Ranjit.

Since I dreaded the cruelty with which Nial Singh is threatened

through the King's vengeance, in the letter informing him of my adventure I took the liberty of indicating what punishment I desired for the culprit. I described to the King what a trick he had played me in forcing me to say it was my good pleasure to give him five hundred rupees, and I begged that he might be made to disgorge these for the benefit of the poor, and further, that five hundred lashes might be administered to him with the whip, while he was forced to declare that it was his good pleasure to be flogged. If Ranjit was in a good temper on the day he received my letter, he doubtless laughed at the jest, and Nial Singh will receive the punishment in question of his own free will, by his own desire and for his good pleasure.

I told you of one man who was hanged at Kotli: there were a dozen hanging from the trees close to my camp on the bank of the river. While the governor was calling upon me he told me in a perfectly unconcerned tone that he had had two hundred hanged during his first year of office, but that by this time it sufficed to hang one here and there to keep the country in good order: observe that the "country" in question is a wretched and almost deserted little region. For my part, if I had to govern it I should start by placing the governor and his three hundred soldiers in irons as the worst robbers of all, and set them to work at making a good road. At present they live in idleness on the labour of the poor peasants; they would still live on the same rice, but they would have earned it.

The intelligence and roguery of the Kashmiris are proverbial in the East. I am simply inundated with men professing to be of good social position and offering to serve as my *cicerone*. They know everything and have been everywhere; but when I question them at all closely, I discover that their learning is nothing but a clever imposture. A few, however, were highly recommended to me by M. Allard, and I received them frequently. With one of them, a Mogul by extraction, I do an hour's Persian every morning. As for the pundits, who are all Brahmins by caste, they are grossly ignorant, and there is not one of my Hindu servants who does not regard himself as of better caste than they are. They eat

everything except beef and drink arrack, though nobody does so in India but men of the lowest castes.

It is impossible for me to return by way of Ladakh, as was my intention: the journey would be too dangerous. By the time I leave Kashmir my scientific baggage will be too valuable for me to risk it in the wilds. From Punch to this place I had an escort of fifty men, but this would not be enough in case of unfortunate incidents; I should require five hundred, or an army. I shall probably return to Simla by way of Kishtwar [Kichetouar], Chamba [Chumba] and the Kulu country, or else through Rajaori, Jammu and Bilaspur. I shall arrange for every petty prince through whose territory I have to pass to receive a firman from Ranjit Singh apprising him of the fact. But at least half of this route runs through the territory of Rajah Gulab Singh, whose royal residence is at Jammu; so I shall have nothing to fear there. Nevertheless, whatever the weather may be, it will be a glorious day when I cross the Sutlej again.

My health has quite recovered. It cannot fail to be invigorated by a healthy climate. In a month's time I shall be eating cherries from my garden, next apricots, then peaches and almonds, then pears and apples, and last of all grapes. In the evening I walk beneath a magnificent vine-covered trellis, the vine-stocks of which, though still young, are two feet round: I have never seen anything like them. I am also promised delicious melons, and even water-melons. This last promise implies a threat of a very hot summer, but it is like our own in the South. Its products are the same. The weather at present is the same as in Paris, but finer and less changeable.

At Saharanpur I saw some hundred plants from Kashmir, brought into India by merchants coming from these parts. Half of them grow in the Himalayas too, to the east of the Sutlej, and having determined the mean altitude at which each of them grows, I had made a remarkably accurate guess as to the absolute altitude of Kashmir. I conjectured that it was between five and six thousand English feet; and a few barometrical observations made since my arrival, which I have as yet been able to work out only approxi-

mately, by comparing the average readings for the month of May at Calcutta, Bombay and Saharanpur, point to five thousand three hundred feet.

I have discovered that my cook spent a long time in the service of an old English doctor who was very fond of good living, and I have given him a free hand in the exercise of his talents. Since there is no lack of material here, I have almost had a good table since this discovery. Yet these good dinners of which I can boast do not include either bread or wine. The water-drinking to which I am condemned as a matter of necessity sometimes gives me a morbid craving for a bottle of light wine. I have far better servants than I had last year, especially the chief of them, who acts as my treasurer. I could not touch a single coin in this country without entirely losing my prestige, and it has been a great piece of good fortune for me to find among my men a servant fit to keep my purse-strings, opening and shutting them as required and writing down all that is paid in or out. I have more of them, too, twice as many as during my first campaign in the Himalayas. It is a heavy expense, but an unavoidable one. After all, their number does not exceed fourteen, whereas M. Allard has a hundred and fifty, and even then he has not enough!

Yesterday I heard from M. Allard, who forwarded me some letters from India, Ludhiana and Delhi, all very old ones, for his messenger was lost in the snow for a week. I heard from Delhi of the fall of the Wellington cabinet, and received a gazette from Bombay telling me of the insurrection at Warsaw. For the rest, not a word on French affairs. Ignorant though I am of what policy they may follow, I am none the less glad of the entry of M. Brougham and Earl Grey into the English ministry. It seems to me a pledge of friendship between France and England, harmony between which appears to me a necessary condition of peace in Europe. It remains to be seen whether the Duke of Wellington succeeds in gaining a majority in the House of Lords in opposition to the Whig ministry, and so forcing it to resign, or at least play an inglorious part and one of no benefit to liberty.

I shall shortly write the Jardin a letter which will please M.

Cuvier, for it will promise him all the fish to be found in the waters of Kashmir. This letter will follow a very zigzag course before it reaches you, and I do not even know whether it will find the kindly M. Cordier still at Chandernagore to forward it, for during the last three months I have been in ignorance of what is going on in "French India", as we have the comical impertinence to call it. I cannot end without a melancholy remark, which is that your last letters were dated July 22, 1830. Ten months without news! What a long time! Adieu, my dear Father, adieu; I should like to have as much confidence in you as you justly have in me, but I am thirty years old and you . . . are more than twice as much. Why, surely Porphyre turned forty thirteen days ago, and Frédéric is talking about his grey hairs! Well, well, so be it! Let us all grow old together, and see which does it best!

. . . I am not homesick, no; but when my thoughts turn towards home and you, they cannot do so without very poignant feelings. My isolated position would be nothing at all out of the ordinary for a man like so many—perhaps the majority—who can only love without passion; but you, my dear Father, you and those who know me as you do can alone imagine what sadness there is in my soul at times when I am anxious about those I love.

I am not writing to Porphyre to-day: this letter is for him as well as you; but I find in my portfolio a few pages addressed to Frédéric, written from I know not where. Send them to him. Adieu, again adieu.

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(C.F. LVII)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Kashmir, May 14, 1831

If I had not thought, my dear Porphyre, that a missive weighing a kilogram was rather heavy for the Honourable Company, I should have added these pages to the monstrous packet of written

matter that I sent off yesterday under the frank of the Chevalier Ryan at Calcutta to be forwarded to Chandernagore and thence to Father; but the postal authorities might have protested against such an abuse of privilege. That is why I am dividing my works into two volumes: this one, intended for you, will, I hope, join the other at Chandernagore and travel with it. I have given Father a very detailed account of the hitches which occurred during my perambulations. But after all no harm came of it, quite the contrary. This is a land of knaves! scoundrels! bandits! But I am prudent. Nothing is commoner than to kill a man for the sake of stealing an old pair of breeches worth twenty or twenty-four sous, half a rupee. The whole population goes about armed with sabres, which they wield, I am told, with great skill, and the figures one meets on the road all carry long matchlocks on their shoulder, though in my opinion these are not very alarming.

I may possibly see M. Allard again in the hills. The mother of a brood of petty hill rajahs has just died, leaving nine *lakhs* of rupees—two million two hundred and fifty thousand francs. The children are fighting over the estate, and Ranjit has just sent M. Allard to the spot to remove all cause of dispute—that is to say, the nine *lakhs*.

On the 8th, the day of my arrival here, the governor sent me as a *naza* ten sheep, forty fowls, two hundred eggs, several sacks of barley, rice and flour, some sugar, some brandy distilled in the country, some of the wine made there, which is like bad *anisette* mixed with bad kirsch, etc. I had it all distributed among my suite, but the King has just sent fresh orders for my table to be regularly supplied at his expense, a favour which I care about only for form's sake, though for form's sake it is essential. I should almost have a good table if only I had some bread and wine; but my old port from Simla, which is so much admired by the English, is stronger than brandy and I am keeping it for cold or rainy days in the hills. I am very well; the colour of my hands clashes with that of my arms, but I am looking well. At Delhi I treated myself to the luxury of a looking-glass and I look at myself once a month. But I am terribly thin.

Be it known to you that I have never seen such hideous witches as in Kashmir. Womankind here is extraordinarily ugly; I mean the common women whom one sees in the streets and fields, for those of a higher class spend their whole lives shut up and are never seen. It is true that all little girls who show promise of being pretty are sold at the age of eight and exported to the Punjab and India. They are sold by their parents for from twenty to three hundred francs, the average price being fifty or sixty francs. All female servants in the Punjab are slaves, and whatever the English may do to abolish this custom, it none the less prevails in Northern India too. They are fairly well treated, and their position is hardly worse than that of their mistresses in the harem. The wives of the ex-King of Kabul, Shah Shuja el Mulk [Schah-Schudja-el-Moulouk], whom I saw at Ludhiana, are badly kicked about by the eunuchs who keep guard over them; their servants certainly get fewer kicks.

Every day innumerable troops of public women present themselves at my garden gate. An Asiatic gentleman in my place would always have forty or so of them singing and dancing about him, but I preserve the integrity of my European character in both morals and costume. This is a great passport to their respect.

It is whispered among the politicians of Kashmir that I have come to spy out the state of the country and its resources and treat with Ranjit Singh for its cession to the English Government. Others allege that I have come to lease it from Ranjit in the capacity of viceroy, in return for an annual sum which I should undertake to give the Maharajah. You can well imagine that I weigh my every word, so as to give no substance to all these stupid rumours; I entrench myself behind my *ilm* [*ilom*], my learning. When Moslems call upon me I talk about the Koran, which I call the Holy Koran, or about Mohammed (whose name be praised!) and matters concerning their religion . . . as for the so-called pundits, or Hindu doctors, who came by hundreds during my early days here, I expose their ignorance of the *shasters* and the slackness of their discipline. Any man here a little less ignorant than the rest and less overtly a knave is a saint; and the estimable

public of Kashmir takes me for a most saintly Christian. When I read, it is always a prayer-book. . . . This humbug is a piece of exalted diplomacy.

The season will soon come round when ships from Bordeaux are constantly arriving at Calcutta; if they bring me letters, I shall receive these here within a month. I shall work with fresh ardour when I have had some. For a very long time, too, I have been without English newspapers. I feel the lack of them more now that my habits are comparatively sedentary. Adieu for to-day.

Kashmir, May 20

Just a few words to tell you that Ranjit Singh is a fine fellow, though I hope you think so already, and have done so for a long time past. An officer of his household arrived this morning, having been a fortnight on the way from Amritsar, where the King is camping at present. He brings me a most gracious royal firman. Ranjit writes that he has just received my letter from Kotli—that is, the complaint I made of Nial Singh—and that Rajah Gulab Singh, who had heard of the matter much sooner, had arrested that chief without delay; so that, having him in his hands on the day when my complaint reached him, he did justice to it then and there (and in a fashion that proves how much tact he has). He has not ordered any of the cruelties or barbarous mutilations which are the custom of the country, but he has had the guilty man placed in irons and shut up in a fortress, where he will remain until I have asked for his pardon. You see, old man, none but Ranjit would have acted like this. He knows that his penal code is odious to us—and he is punishing this man as he would be punished in a European country. The five hundred rupees sent me by the governor on the day of my arrival here, without prejudice to the two thousand which Ranjit had ordered to be given me long before, were an extra favour on the part of the Rajah, and not, as I had thought, a restitution of the money stolen by Nial Singh. In his letter received to-day Ranjit informs me that he has ordered his vizier to make restitution in his name; so all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. The King

further presses me to behave in Kashmir as though I were at home: "This country is yours," he writes, "so take up your quarters in whichever of my gardens you prefer. Command, and you will be obeyed." I am leaving you to go out in a boat on the lake and river. I have the splendour-loving ex-governor's state-barge and thirty oarsmen in my service at a monthly wage of—only guess the monthly wage of an oarsman! Two francs forty-six centimes! So I ought to give these thirty men thirty rupees a month! But since my position makes it incumbent upon me to be grand, I give them forty, besides a gratuity when I go out in my boat. What delights me is that I am training two very promising fellows to prepare zoological specimens: one is a hunter by profession, the other an embroiderer with taper fingers. I shall tempt them by high wages to follow me to India, where I have found no low-caste man yet who would do this job at any price. Good-bye, old fellow. How I regret that you are not part of my expedition; but guns, nets and books for pressing my plants will accompany me, and I shall not return empty-handed. The boring thing is that I have to travel with a certain amount of pomp. My little court follows me on all my excursions, sitting in two rows on either side of my armchair, like strings of onions. At first they used to twitch their ears sharply when I discharged my gun over their heads; they are now broken to fire, but continue to gape when I take off my coat (of a "Smoke of Navarino" shade) and roll my sleeves up to the shoulder to catch hold of plants floating in the water. Adieu.

Kashmir, May 29

At last this letter is going off this evening with several others, one for the Jardin des Plantes. I have received courier after courier from M. Allard, which is most kind of him, considering the great distance by which we are separated—some hundred and fifty leagues. They have brought me nothing but letters from India and newspapers from the same place. M. Cordier writes that he is expecting a French boat daily. May it bring me letters from Paris! Adieu, my dear old fellow; I embrace you with all my heart.

28

(C.F. LXI)

To M. de Tracy, Peer of France, Paris

Kashmir, May 28, 1831

DEAR MONSIEUR,

Had I not known that most of my letters to my father were sent on by him to his friends, I should not have allowed more than two years to go by without writing to you. But during the wandering and laborious life that I have led since my departure from Europe, so many material cares have absorbed the precious time I have for study, and so many interesting things have competed every day for the brief hours of rest remaining to me after an often very long day's march, that till now, dear Monsieur, I have constantly postponed telling you how grateful it is to me, in the midst of my present solitude, to think of the affection of which you have given me so many proofs. Memories of my early youth often pass before my mind, and I always recall with the same tender affection the truly fatherly care that I was so happy as to receive from you then. I shall requite it all my life by the feelings of a son.

The three years which will soon have elapsed since my departure have brought me much enjoyment, it is true. My studies have been a constant source of serious pleasure to me. The variety of natural scenery, from the south of India to the mountains of Tibet, beyond the Himalayas, could not fail to produce other and more vivid impressions upon me. And finally, during this long journey through such strange countries and among such strange peoples, I have found frequent cases of European civilization. At this distance from Europe English and French no longer exist; we all belong to the same country, we are all Europeans. My own fellow-countrymen could not have given me a better welcome than I have received during the short halts that I have made at a

large number of English stations. The fact of being a foreigner was my claim upon the hospitality which was offered me, at first with a ceremonious assiduity, but by the second day its forms were almost always dictated by a friendly cordiality. Thus in the course of my travels I have met numbers of kind people of whom I became genuinely fond, and who will, I believe, always recall with the same charm as I do the chance which made us acquainted with one another. Besides, up to about six months ago I have always been so fortunate as to receive news of my family and yours fairly regularly, and on many occasions this correspondence has given me the pleasing illusion of being temporarily drawn closer to Europe. So much for my pleasures, but I have had many annoyances and anxieties as well.

In the first place, the extreme slowness and continual vexations of my interminable voyage out made it seem even longer than it was, though I ought rather to have congratulated myself upon these frequent halts in lands which I shall probably never have another chance of seeing. Thus at Rio de Janeiro I was able to form a true opinion of what a tropical American state is like. At the Cape of Good Hope I was able to admire the wisdom and humanity of English colonial institutions, and in our paltry Island of Bourbon I was able to acquaint myself thoroughly with the infamy and absurdity of our own. It only remained for me to see their ridiculousness and idiocy at Pondicherry, where I was detained for a fortnight—more time than I needed for this, but not long enough to settle down to work seriously. I was in a hurry to get to Bengal.¹

I arrived in Bengal at the most unfortunate season, at the beginning of the terrible hot weather which keeps Europeans prisoner in their houses all day, and is only slightly tempered by pouring rains at the solstice. Thus I found myself compelled to remain in Calcutta till the end of the autumn, which alone puts a stop to it. I now realize that it was a piece of great good fortune for me to have had to stay so long in the capital, but at that time

¹ This paragraph is omitted in C.F. LXI, but included in the version published in *Corr. indd.* LXXVIII.

I did not appreciate its advantages so much. Every moment that was not stolen by keeping up my rather numerous social connexions was occupied by study, but I could not watch the time approaching when my knowledge of the Indian tongue and the temperate season would permit me to start out on my travels, without often thinking with alarm of the inadequacy of my pecuniary resources and the expenses which would then be imposed upon me. Still, you see from the very address from which this letter is written that I did not let myself be kept back by the terrible incompatibility between these two factors. But I have had to make many sacrifices, the most painful of which have been those limiting my facilities for investigation and the assistance which I might have had with my work, so as to increase the number of my specimens. I did not much care about the rest—the privations which only affected me personally—for I have had the rare good fortune to preserve my health unimpaired.

Some ten months ago I was offered by chance a prospect of visiting Kashmir, and that hitherto almost unknown part of the Himalayas which extends from the Indus to the Sutlej. I believed it my duty to seize such a valuable opportunity of traversing a land closed to Europeans, and in spite of the unwillingness of the English Government to further my plans by communicating to this effect with the Rajah of Lahore, and in spite of the latter's even greater unwillingness to admit to his territories a foreigner of a variety incomprehensible to him, I not only succeeded in obtaining that prince's permission to travel through his territories, but was also received by him with the greatest distinction. He regards me and treats me as his guest. I shall profit by his munificent hospitality till the end of the autumn, when I shall return to the English possessions.

In these vast regions the condition of humankind does not seem to me capable of any improvement or change so long as religious ideas in them remain the same; and Hinduism seems immovable. How deplorable is the condition of mankind in this vast Orient! The English Government in India, though it still calls for reforms, none the less merits much praise, and its adminis-

tration is an immense benefit to the provinces subject to it; I had not appreciated it at its full value till I had travelled through this country, which has remained independent—remained, that is, the scene of hideous acts of violence and continual brigandage and murder.

Society in the East is vitiated from its very foundations. Its chief element, the family, is almost non-existent. Among the upper classes, which set the example for the rest, polygamy makes Indian fathers indifferent to their children, owing to their great number, and stirs up horrible jealousies and hatred between brothers. Woman is an impure creature, regarded by the husband as scarcely belonging to the same species as himself. As the children grow up, they soon acquire this abominable idea of contempt for their mother, which estranges them from her as soon as they can dispense with her care. Banished from the domestic hearth, how should sympathy display itself in a more lively form outside? There is no friendship between men except in the fashion of the antique world.

The domestic morality of India, which is its greatest source of misery, seems to me to admit of no improvement so long as that country retains its existing religious institutions, but these are perhaps too generally believed to be immutable. All direct attempts at religious conversion made by the English, especially in Bengal, have completely failed. The Indians, though sounded everywhere, have nowhere been willing to exchange Mohammed or Brahma for Jesus Christ or the Trinity, but for some years past the Government has wisely withdrawn its support from the missionaries (and courageously too, for it takes some courage for the East India Company to provoke the stupid or hypocritical wrath of Parliament) and opened free schools in Calcutta, Benares and Delhi, to which it attracts children of the middle class by every means of influence in its power, for the purpose of instructing them in the languages and sciences of Europe without ever telling them about our follies.

I visited these schools, especially in Calcutta, where they have a larger number of pupils, and I talked with a number of young

men in their higher classes who had quite naturally been converted from Mohammed or Brahma to reason by their European education. Many of them complained, however, that the possession of this treasure only made them more wretched, by cutting them off from the rest of their nation and giving them a conception of happiness and a desire for it under forms forbidden them by their caste; and none of them has yet had the courage openly to cross this infernal barrier. Yet if there is any hope of ever civilizing the East, it is by this means alone. The English Government would hasten its action enormously if it were to substitute the use of the English language in courts of justice and all public transactions for that of Persian, introduced by the Mogul conquerors, but the knowledge of which has remained quite foreign to the mass of the people and has only survived in certain hereditary professions. This change could easily be carried out within less than ten years, for the Indians learn English more quickly than they do Persian, and Persian is no use to those who know it except in the routine of their profession, whereas English would be a key to the whole of European knowledge. I have sometimes been asked what would become of English domination in India when European enlightenment became widely enough disseminated to allow the Indians to govern themselves. "What does that matter to you?" I would reply. "By that time you and your children will be long dead, and your English domination will have ceased to be of use to this land."

There is no lack of narrow minds and hearts that are hostile to this generous project, but I have no doubt it will be adopted by the Government before many years have gone by. It will disseminate the enlightenment of Europe in this land, and qualify it to govern itself one day.

I should have liked, dear Monsieur, to be able to forget our own country on leaving it, for the Revolution, the threatening symptoms in European politics and the uncertainty of its fate are only too often a source of anxiety to me, which is all the more painful because I have received no news either of my family or of yours since then. If my studies left me any spare time, it would

always be haunted by dismal conjectures. I am grateful to them for leaving me none.

Adieu, Monsieur; allow me to say once again that neither time nor distance will ever weaken my feelings of tender and respectful attachment.

29

(C.F. LXIII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Kashmir, June 11, 1831

MY DEAR FATHER,

In writing to me a few days ago by the royal *dak* (which, running day and night, gets from here to Lahore in four days), M. Allard was tactless enough to tell me that he had sent off one of his own couriers the day before with a quantity of newspapers and letters from India, one of which was from Chandernagore. I reckon that his man may arrive to-day. How can I help thinking about it twenty times an hour? . . . In replying to the General, I have forbidden him ever to announce the arrival of letters from Chandernagore to me in advance, for the disappointment would be too cruel if they were to be no more than a few unimportant lines written from that place. Having been without news of you for eleven months past, I must confess that unfortunately I do not possess your humorous stoicism to help me bear it with a smiling face. If I could find any of my own kind among my Kashmiri brothers in Adam, they would see me very downcast when I am thinking of you, my friends and our country.

Instead of a courier from M. Allard there arrived one this morning from—guess whom!—the king of Little Tibet, Ahmed Shah, a most polite gentleman, I must say. He writes that, having heard of my arrival in Kashmir, he hastens to assure me of his friendship and devotion. He places his country at my disposal; his messenger, a confidential servant as Eurybates of old was to

Agamemnon, confirms his master's respect for and attachment to the English; the good man adds that the Sizhs are a lot of rogues and tells me that with one or two English regiments I could go very far. While receiving these confidences I did not fail to summon a man whom I know to be a spy of Ranjit Singh's, on the pretext of using his services as interpreter. I made him read me Shah Ahmed's letter in Persian, and entrusted him with the preparation of the reply, the rough draft of which I dictated to him. First I am sending him a page of compliments; then I say that I am enchanted to find myself so near him (fourteen days' march), since my presence in Kashmir overwhelms him with happiness. I add, however, that I am not English, but only an intimate friend of the Company. As for the presents he offers me, gold, musk and rock crystal from his mountains, I thank him most heartily, but say that he would do me a far greater service if he were to set all his subjects on the track of the wild animals in his country, and send me them alive. I also mean to ask him a few questions about the geography of the lands by which his own is surrounded.

I have no doubt this curious communication is in response to overtures indiscreetly made to this prince six or seven years ago by M. Moorcroft. M. Moorcroft was an English doctor in the service of the Company. He was director of the horse-breeding establishments in India, a very highly paid post. The Government several times granted him leave, which he spent in travelling on the northern side of the Himalayas. Central Asia was to him what *Les Essences réelles* are to certain other persons. But the pitcher went to the well so often that in the end it broke. M. Moorcroft died there of a putrid fever, or else of a dose of poison, or even a gunshot: the matter has never been satisfactorily cleared up. He went to Ladakh and crossed over into Kashmir, where he lived in the same garden as I am occupying. He thought that by jesuitically assuming a political character, which he no more possessed than I do, he would smooth away many difficulties in the later part of his journey, so he wrote Shah Ahmed a most ambiguous letter, which did not fail to fall into Ranjit's

hands. The latter took good care to send it to the English Government without either complaint or comment, but a duplicate found its way to Ahmed Shah. The Prince thought the English were at his gates, and though during the last six years he might have convinced himself that they were at least ready to wait very patiently for him to open them, you see that he has taken me for a successor of Moorcroft's and is making overtures to me. If Ranjit Singh still harbours any suspicions of me, I hope that my frank behaviour in this affair will entirely dispel them. I have acted without subtlety, or rather without over-subtlety, which was obviously the cleverest thing to do. Thanks to his poverty and his desert wastes, Shah Ahmed is perfectly safe from a Sikh invasion. Hence I do not compromise him in any way by making a parade of my good faith.

If my Tibetan emissary prove to be no more than a spy and Shah Ahmed's letter a forgery, Ranjit will be delightfully mystified when he sees me take his spy as my secretary in order to undeceive the supposed Ahmed. But the sly Sikh would not dare to play me such a trick.

Not that I am blind to the little traps he sets for me at times. The governor sent his secretary to me recently, who told me that he had received the most mortifying letter from the King. Ranjit had sent him word that I had written saying that he (the governor) was a fool, that nothing went on properly in Kashmir, and that he surrounded himself with a crowd of idiots, leaving the clever men without office: he ordered him to ask me which were the capable men, and to employ all those whom I should point out to him. I had the governor told the truth, which was that I had never written anything of the sort to the Maharajah, who was probably only trying to make fun of him and stimulate his zeal by alarming him. The poor devil of a governor insisted that I should at once constitute myself Great Elector of Kashmir. He humbly admitted that he was no more than a fool (a perfectly true confession). He offered to make a clean sweep of his household, and, above all, he pressed me to give him a certificate of my satisfaction with him, for he seemed sure that I had com-

plained of him to the Maharajah, and the fate of my brigand of a Nial Singh has inspired these bearded fellows with a salutary terror of my influence with Ranjit Singh. I refused to give him the desired certificate, but promised to go on assuring the King of my approval of the governor, so long as he continued to give me equal cause to do so. As for the functions of a Great Elector, I told him to go to the devil and pointed out the absurdity of his request.

Now I believe Ranjit only played the governor this nasty little trick in order to find out whether I was in the least disposed to meddle with his business; but at whatever point he may present himself he will be routed with equal loss.

There is nothing straightforward or simple about the people of this country. They resort to craft in everything. It is idiocy for a European to play the same game with them; we are always sure to be overreached. The sublimest of all rogues among us, I am convinced, a mere innocent compared with Ranjit Singh. We have only to be the decent fellows we naturally are to disconcert them, by never seeing hints and saying everything clearly and out loud.

I am preparing for an expedition to the frontier. The King's spy, who is at the head of the chancellery, has begged the favour of accompanying me. He shall certainly have it, and I think once will be enough for his zeal. I am promising myself to freeze the rogue thoroughly on some mountain-top.

The summer here is very hot. But the governor sends me ice every morning, and I have taught my *khangsama* to make a very light iced punch. I wind up my dessert with it, and you will agree that in a barbarous country this is no small refinement. But I have more lace ruffles than shirts. I am about to find myself with sixty-eight servants in my pay, which ensures the Rajah's rupees a very rapid rate of outflow. Every morning I am brought a sheep, a dozen fowls, a great basket of eggs, a sack of rice and one of flour, and everything else in proportion—and I have not a scrap of bread to eat! Adieu, for I feel in the mood for complaining, and that would be too ungracious. The right of remonstrance must

be reserved for bad days; more than one may yet be in store before that on which we meet.

30

(C.F. LXX)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Isle of the Plane-Trees, in the
Lake of Kashmir, August 8, 1831

MY DEAR FATHER,

Could you but see me to-day, you would hardly recognize me, and might possibly take me for an indolent Asiatic. For the last few days the extreme heat has sapped my European energy. I have deserted my garden, which has become a perfect hothouse, and come to seek a breath of air on the lake. But even here, at the foot of the mountains, the same still atmosphere prevails. I envy India its hot winds. I had brought some work with me, but the first necessity is to exist, which has been a very laborious job for some days past. This overpowering heat is rare in Kashmir; it only comes when the summer rains have entirely failed, as they have done this year. The rivers from which the country draws its living have been dry for a month past. It is a public calamity. The people were anxious to have public prayers for rain offered up by the mullahs in the mosques; but the sky was so far from promising that the mullahs had small hope of success from their prayers, and so persuaded the Sikh governor to forbid them to say any for a long time. Yesterday, seeing the mountain-tops covered with storm-clouds, they caused the interdict for which they themselves had asked to be raised; and the country population hurried up from every direction to a hamlet which I can see from here, where a hair from Mohammed's beard is preserved.¹ If faith and profound piety exist upon earth it is among the Moslems; yet the poor people will not reap a grain of rice the more. The

¹ *Ed.*—This hamlet is Hazrat Bal on the Dal Lake.

dervishes, who are the least pious of all the faithful, ought to have come and asked the advice of my barometer as to the probability of a change in the weather before they prayed heaven for it. Yesterday's threatening clouds cleared away during the night, as I had foreseen, and predicted, too, out of a sort of Christian vanity. We have returned to an infernal "set fair".

The water in the lake is so warm that I do not feel I gain anything by a change of element when I dive into it. One has to stay in a long time before feeling the slightest sense of refreshment. But the only part of it suited for bathing is very deep, so one has to swim. I have become highly skilled at this form of exercise and can keep it up for quite a long time; but for all that, it is quite hard work in still water, and when I get back into my boat I have not gained much fresh strength. The sun has not spared me. With the exception of my hands and face, which have been much hardened and blackened, my whole body has turned the most vivid crimson. It is a torture to be chafed by the lightest garment. I have abandoned European clothes and am profiting by the conventions of Oriental modesty; they are not very burdensome. A servant standing at my side armed with a great fan administers an artificial wind-storm, thanks to which alone I manage to feel now and then that life is a pleasant thing.

Bernier, whom I think you have read, mentions this little island. It is a toy of the Mogul emperors. It is perfectly shaded by two huge plane-trees, the only ones left of the four planted by Shah Jahan; that will show you how small it is. The palace consists simply of one great hall, open to all the winds when they are pleased to blow, with a ceiling supported on columns in a fantastic style carried off from some ancient pagoda. Shalimar with its fine avenue of poplars is opposite. Nishat Bagh [Nichâte-bâgh], with its beautiful shades, looks like a great black patch at the foot of the yellowing mountains. In the opposite direction is Saifkhan Bagh, now only a forest of giant planes. The little mosque to which pious Moslems come from India and Persia to adore *hazrat bal* ["*azerette boll*"]—literally, "His Excellency the Hair" from their Prophet's beard—shows the gilt top of its minaret above

a group of similar trees. Behind is the Throne of Solomon [Takht-i-Suliman], who according to the chronicles of Kashmir was a great traveller. The panorama by which I am surrounded calls up a host of memories. The inhabitants of Kashmir spend their lives gazing upon it, for it consoles them for their wretched state. I confess I am still too European to find any charm in it. The figures one sees in the East are picturesque by reason of their costume, but the whole system of manners is most prosaic. The outward forms of material existence vary between the various classes of society as much as they do among us, if not more; but the inward life is everywhere the same. There is hardly ever any passion to lend it relief. With their system of the perpetual seclusion of women, the degraded condition of these—for they are regarded as impure—and the institution of polygamy, you can imagine that love is rare. It is equally so between brothers. The respect due from the younger to the elder ones forbids any such feelings of intimacy. Violent hatreds seldom lead to any but ignoble crimes, and I do not believe manners have ever been very different from what they are to-day since the introduction of Islam. With us it is manners that make institutions, but the Koran is very different from the Gospel; it is the book of universal law. What variations are possible in manners based upon this immutable law?

I have just made a most extraordinary discovery: to-day is my thirtieth birthday! The *Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes* tells me that this is probably the middle point in the journey of life; yet I feel as if I had been born yesterday, and these thirty years that have elapsed seem to me like a dream! After all, since nothing is certain except the ego, perhaps it all really is no more than a dream. I do not suppose the *Essences réelles* can convince me of the contrary; and I cling to this idea in the hope that the future will prove to be real and will pass by less rapidly.

If only to please you, I should be glad not to remain permanently a bachelor. I endorse the entire wisdom of what you wrote me on the subject in one of your last letters: not Lucilius himself received more philosophical counsels. But philosophy has

little voice in such matters. It is not the "efficient cause" in that business, for it is a lottery in which small stakes are impossible. For myself, at least, I feel convinced that the happiness or unhappiness of the rest of my life would be at stake—and temperamentally I am not a gambler. By the time I return to France shall I still possess the faculty of losing my head? Nor is it enough to lose one's head. That is not even half the miracle to be wrought; one has also to inspire the same madness in another. And what talisman shall I bring back from Asia to work this spell? I shall return to you very much faded for my thirty years and a little bit over, with no personal attractions and no youth either of manner or of mind. I ask you: who would be likely to single me out? By my age a man has certainly left behind him more than half the chances he ever had of attracting attention. Our manners do not admit of that degree of familiarity between young people with which I need to be known if I am possibly to inspire a deep feeling of attachment; and in society as seen by young girls, what can they know of the men who pass them by, or even of those who are paraded before them? On the other hand, here I am, having already reached the age of thirty without ever feeling a young girl to be anything but a child. I am brotherly, or even paternal with them—everything, in fact, that I ought not to be. And they have always paid me back in the same coin! The young English lady whose fate interested you for a little while has written to me since leaving India. Her letters are quite filial in tone. While I was in Calcutta she always saw me with her father, who had no other society; whereas a band of young men—some of whom, however, were not so young as I was—shared the hospitality of her family on occasion. She took me at my word. Have I grown any younger since then?

The surest way of giving any real substance to your castles in Spain would be to carry off from Kashmir one of those beauties who are said to be common there in Moslem families of high rank. It would not be difficult to negotiate. But you would find your daughter-in-law such a strange kind of animal in every way that you would soon present her to the Jardin des Plantes, where I

admit that she would be far more in place than with you. The bindings here are in general of a darker shade than those of the quadrooms¹ of San Domingo: you would think that beyond a certain point there was no coquetry involved in a shade of swarthinness more or less; but people are not of that opinion in Kashmir. The swarthiest of them blacken one half of their faces and daub the other with white, red and yellow. I humbly beg the beautiful Western ladies to pardon me; but this daubing suits them admirably. It gives the eyes an expression that justifies all the good or bad verses written by Arabs or Persians to their mistresses' eyes.

A light breeze is getting up and the sun is about to hide itself behind the mountains. Adieu then, my dear father. This is my hour of deliverance. I am going to throw myself into the water, which will certainly be very picturesque, for it is the enchanted lake of Kashmir. But when will the day come when I shall bathe prosaically in the river in Paris? . . . My men suffer far more from the heat than I do. Lying on the grass on the shores of the lake, they look like fish cast up on the sea-shore. They heartily curse what little strength remains to me. They are no flatterers, for my faithful Sikh officers will tell me that I am not only a *Sikandar Beg* (Alexander) but an *Aflatun* (Plato); and the intelligent Mogul who acts as my secretary and *cicerone* here will exclaim that God is all-powerful and that I am *Restoum* (Rustum)!

Closed on August 16, as I mount my horse for my last expedition in Kashmir, which will take twenty-five days.

I have only time to embrace you and Porphyre.

¹ The allusion is to a family jest of the Jacquemonts', frequently referred to in these letters, by which Hindu ladies (*hindoues*) are called "in-douze" (duodecimos), and the quadroom ladies of Santo Domingo (*quarteronnes*) "in-quarto" (quartos).

31

*Corr. ind. II, No. LXXXVI)**To Colonel Don José de Hezeta, Calcutta*

Camp at Panjgam [Pundjeggamme] in
the mountains of Kashmir

August 19, 1831

MY DEAR HEZETA,

"Meanwhile", you conclude your letter of June 20, "botanize and geologize".

Since it is pouring with rain, my dear fellow, and it is impossible for me to botanize, I am going to give myself the pleasure of writing to you again to-day, though I have already answered you yesterday. That will compensate me for being kept inside my little tent. It is pitched beneath a huge plane-tree in a lovely garden planted with the trees and adorned with the flowers of our European gardens. Dressed in my lama's costume I laugh at abrupt changes of temperature; I cope with my "*radical moisture*" by an infusion of Tibetan wormwood, and thanks to my skilled hygiene and good, stringy constitution, as you call it, I feel full of "*radical heat*".

When I return to Paris, my dear Hezeta, and publish certain parts of my travels, you will then be at liberty to "puff" me as much as you please, and as hot and strong as you like. I shall not flinch or turn a hair. But I cannot allow you to do it at short range, as you do in advance in your letter of June 20. I shall bring back a map of Kashmir, such as it is, a few new plants, a few new and little-known animals, a big geological treatise, a few drawings and a few political sketches, but all this will not make me a benefactor of humanity. The sciences are useful and estimable enough to stand in no need of being "puffed". Nobody will owe me any gratitude; all I ask is some esteem. My travels in Kashmir will never be a poem, for nature has not made me a poet; my sole

ambition is to make an instructive and pleasant story of them. . . .

. . . Lord William has a good memory. He is much annoyed with me on account of a certain adjective: "unadministered" [*in-administré*]. I believe I applied it to the land which he governs in one of my letters to you. You must have shown him this letter. He complained of it—laughingly, I am bound to say—to one of my friends at Simla (Colonel Arnold of the 10th Lancers). Arnold writes me that, while treating it as a joke, he dwelt upon it vigorously and expressed a strong desire to see me again so as to justify himself against my adjective. I have sent an apology to the Colonel, to be repeated to Milord should the opportunity arise, though it is not really an apology, for I stick to my opinion; but I make it clear that Lord William is not responsible for what I find blameworthy. On the contrary, his administration has my full approbation. Since crossing the Sutlej, speaking no language but Hindustani (very much mixed with Punjabi and Persian) and having no society save that of natives, I have learnt far more about their character in ten months than I had done before in two years. All my original judgments have been confirmed, and I am convinced that the English in India are losing through negligence various most potent means of influence which would cost them nothing and be of great use. In nine years M. Allard has gallicized the people of Lahore—where he is not even master—more than you have anglicized your Indians during the last hundred years. Prince Sher Singh (Ranjit's son and probable heir) eats sitting up to table on a chair. This is only one detail. I could quote a thousand more.

You will be pleased to know that Lord William is very popular at Simla, as he has been everywhere recently. He closes the mouths of the malcontents by his dinners, which are said to be excellent. For my part I have been drinking water for the last six months, and am none the worse for it. Ranjit treats me with the greatest distinction; when he writes to me, he gives me three lines of titles. I told him without blinking an eyelid that he was the Bonaparte of the Punjab; he replied that I was the *Aflatun* of the age, the *Bocrate* (Socrates) of the century, and we remain great friends.

He is as ignorant as you can imagine, but witty, and has an enquiring mind. One can get something out of him; besides which, he is quite a good fellow. Since everybody believes me to be high in his favour, I see nobody here but flatterers, who are petitioners in disguise; hence my reputation as a *jainchmand* [*dainche maunde*, i.e. knowledgeable person] is even greater here than it was at Lahore.

I live like a hermit and my virtue is the subject of universal admiration. M. Moorcroft did not set a like example of European continence here. His principal occupation was making love, and if his friends are surprised that his travels were so unproductive, they may ascribe it to this cause.

Are your ryots able to put by a few rupees every year? How much a month do they earn? What is the average price of a pound of rice? How many *maunds* does a *bigah* yield annually? ¹ How much under rice? How much under wheat? What is considered a respectable average among your indigo-manufacturing neighbours? How is your liver? Have you got a Bengali master without a great beard on his chin? Imitate me, and eat and drink very little. Be careful not to behave like M. Moorcroft; beware of calomel and English doctors; but, above all, make money and know when to stop, and when you have made some, never buy government stock in your own country. Has not your scoundrel of a king just had the impudence to offer to recognize our shares in the loan issued by the Cortes at a fifteenth part of their value? But adieu, my dear fellow; the sky is clearing, and I am going to follow your advice and botanize.

Write to me "care of Capt. Kennedy, at Sabathu".

I embrace you with all my heart, and I hope that you have not yet become English enough to recoil in horror from this compliment.

¹ Ed.—1 *maund* = 82 lbs.; 1 *bigah* = $\frac{1}{10}$ of an acre.

(C.F. LXXI)

*To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris*Camp among the desolate mountains
between Kashmir and Tibet

August 26, 1831

A furious wind is blowing here, my dear Porphyre, and it will be even worse to-morrow on the mountain-tops which I mean to visit. And here is the cold seizing me by the feet again at night as it did last year in Kanawar, and keeping me awake in bed, philosophizing about the atmospheric currents among the high mountain ranges. Last night I had other things to think about, too. I was thinking of the possibility of a visit from some Little Tibetans; for they sometimes come from a hundred leagues off to sack a caravan or a wretched village, carrying off men, women and children into slavery. However, I am well guarded. The lord of this valley, which is about twenty leagues long, has left his fort to follow me, and his cavalcade swells mine considerably. He is a poor devil reduced to starvation by the exactions of the viceroys of Kashmir. Sometimes, when he is driven to extremes, he revolts and makes war on Ranjit Singh, holding out for six months against the Sikh army with his two hundred matchlocks. I did him the honour of visiting him, during which time I deigned to drink a cup of tea while he dined with my *cicerone*, or Mogul factotum, and the Moslem officer in command of my escort of Lancers. He is turning his country upside down to do me honour. He has sent his army on campaign into the forests and I hope it will bring me some loot for the Museum. All this courtesy is due to interested motives and not to pure love of my Platonic and Socratic wisdom. Through my influence with Ranjit my friend Rasul Malik [Ressoul-Malik] hopes to be relieved of certain heavy obligations to the treasury at Lahore.

We shall see. Not all the people of the country are Nial Singhs. For instance, on being informed of my projected expedition, my friend the saint in Kashmir, Mohammed Shah Sahib, sent one of his junior saints to Rasul Malik to act as my quartermaster, and the good man, not knowing how cold it is here, is sending me some water-melons for my refreshment. A good bottle of wine would be more seasonable. In the long run the liquid crystal of the fountains is a stupid drink. I shall need a great deal of virtue if I am not to get drunk like an Englishman when I am once more the guest of Kennedy the gunner. Tea reaches Kashmir by caravan across Chinese Tartary and Tibet. I do not know why caravan tea has a reputation among us; the tea here has absolutely no aroma. It is prepared with milk, butter, salt and an alkaline salt with a bitter flavour. The result of all these ingredients is a cloudy, reddish soup with an extraordinary flavour, abominable to some palates, but decidedly pleasant to others, among them my own. In Kanawar it is made in a different way: they boil the leaves for an hour or two, then throw away the water and cook the leaves with rancid butter, flour and minced goat's flesh. This makes a vile hash known as "tea". I make mine according to Father's method, that is, with warm water and sugar, but no tea; after which I lie down on my pallet and break into a perspiration, bathed in which I abruptly fall asleep. My Kashmir *kurta* [*courtah*], which is a very bad conductor of heat, stores up that with which I charge my person till two or three o'clock in the morning. This *kurta* would be a mystery to you, if I did not tell you that it is a great robe of very thick Kashmir shawl material, presented to me by Mohammed Shah Sahib. I have also discovered that a soft shawl wrapped round my head and neck is more comfortable than my round hat made of English felt and a black neck-tie, so I allow myself this comfort, which costs me nothing, for I have quantities of shawls.

If our friends could get M. Allard's silver cross exchanged for a gold one, I believe this distinction would make him perfectly happy. It seems to me that some reward is due to those who, like him, have shed honour upon the name of Frenchmen at a

distance from Europe, as he has done. I shall write more to this effect later to the proper quarter. His name is mentioned with respect throughout the whole of English India, and more than respect is paid to him in this country. Everybody is unanimous on the subject of his justice and humanity, as well as of his wisdom. If we could be the means of obtaining some recompense for his services in the Punjab we should be discharging the obligation under which he has laid me. Do you think it would be so very difficult to raise a chevalier of the Legion of Honour to the grade of officer on the strength of the arguments which we could advance? ¹

Adieu for to-day; I embrace you. It is night now and time for dinner. The people at Simla are most likely drinking my health at this moment; for that is how the English show attention to their absent friends, or rather, show attention to themselves under the pretext of absent friends. Woe to these friends when, like me, they have nothing in which to return the compliment but water from the fountain! Adieu once more, old man: I embrace you with all my heart.

Safapur, in the vale of Kashmir
September 1

Here I am down from the heights again, delighted with my expedition in every way. No, I must make an exception in the case of the rocks; sometimes it is the very devil to distinguish between the primary and secondary limestones, and here and there I still have some doubt whether I have done so correctly. But I have brought back some new plants, and, more effective still, two new animals, or one at least, the said beast being a most estimable quadruped. It is a sort of marmot. As for my friend Rasul Malik's sub-brigands, they brought me a bear and a sort of chamois. The latter may be a novelty, but in spite of my most express instructions the scoundrels had mutilated them so badly that I could do nothing with them. Since I was by way of making discoveries, I found a lake ² there which nobody has mentioned before, but

¹ M. Allard was created an officer of the Legion of Honour on November 5, 1832.

² *Ed.*—Probably Manasbal.

which is more like a lake than all those in Kashmir, for it is the only deep one. I am camping upon its shores. I had glorious weather when I most needed it, that is, when I was at the highest point of my expedition, on the watershed between the Hydaspes and Indus, between Kashmir and Tibet. Rasul Malik heaped civilities upon me to the very end. I requited him with good advice on the disadvantages of eating opium like bread, which is what he does. This morning comes a letter from the excellent M. Allard. He announces that the interview between Ranjit Singh and Lord William Bentinck will take place on the left bank of the Sutlej in a little Sikh district subject to the Rajah. He also tells me that the Rajah expressed a desire to see me for the purpose of talking over the various kinds of air, water and land in Kashmir, and other things besides, and did so in a way that makes it impossible for me to refuse to visit Lahore or Amritsar for a second time. He adds that, even if going out of my way like this upsets my plans for visiting the mountains, it is necessary if they are to be carried out. The region of Kulu, through which I want to return to the English Himalayas, is difficult of access, and it would be useful for me to "go to court" in order to collect fresh supplies of favour for the purpose of traversing it easily. "Besides," he adds, "in addition to the hay that you have stowed away in your boxes, the Rajah no doubt proposes to furnish some with which to stuff your boots." So I have just written to the King telling him that I am now on my last campaign in Kashmir, which will be finished in a dozen days or so, and that I shall be leaving these parts ten or twelve days later for the purpose of presenting myself in his sublime presence, in accordance with his desire. I shall give him a map that I have been making in the course of my wanderings from numerous observations taken with the compass, copying it on an enlarged scale, with the place-names written in Persian characters and the mountains in horizontal projection, so that he may understand them; and I hope that my second visit to this remarkable character will be no less pleasant than the first, not to speak of hay and boots!

And so all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. I

could not go zigzagging through the Himalayas as far as the Sutlej with all my rocks, plants, beasts and fishes. I shall leave the hills again at Jammu, the capital of my friend Rajah Gulab Singh, who has also just written to me. The way through the mountains between here and there is fairly good (I mean, of course, for those travelling on foot or on horseback). At Jammu, by the grace of God, I shall find M. Allard and the Rajah's camels, also my tent, for which I have sent to Ludhiana. The Rajah will probably be at Amritsar by that time. I shall get there from Jammu in six or seven days and shall probably not leave Amritsar till the Rajah starts for the meeting-place on the Sutlej. I shall escort my precious baggage so far and then leave M. Allard and the Rajah's camels to take charge of it as far as Ludhiana. Lightly equipped, I shall plunge back into the mountains in the direction of Mandi (Mandinagar), where there are some salt-mines which I very much want to see, avoiding the district between Jammu and that province, where there are vast bamboo forests which, once the autumn is over, give off a terribly fever-stricken atmosphere. The lower regions of the mountains, which I want to visit on leaving Amritsar, will not be too cold in November. On December 1 I shall probably recross the Sutlej. I have no time to write to Father. I am writing to you between a basket of grapes as big as those of the Promised Land and one of excellent pears, in a state of perfect health. Adieu, old fellow; I embrace you and love you with all my heart. My next will most likely be from Lahore or Amritsar.

33

(C.F. LXXII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Pargana of Kamraj [Kammeradje], in
the mountains of Kashmir, on the
banks of the Pohru [Pohoor]
September 6, 1831.
(Despatched from Sopur
September 10, 1831)

MY DEAR FATHER,

I wrote to Porphyre some days ago on my way down from the mountains through which one crosses from this region into Ladakh. Well, if my letter travels safely through the hands of . . . (but the list would be too long, so I spare you the enumeration), and if on reaching Chandernagore it finds a boat ready to sail for France, then, by the time you receive this, you will already know that I have every reason to be satisfied with the beginning of my last expedition in Kashmir. Since then I have had some extra pieces of zoological felicity, followed, it is true, by reverses of the same kind.

True to his promise Rasul Malik turned his mountains upside down to find animals for my benefit, and several times his bearded old Afghans hurried down after me into the plains to bring me what they had caught. This consisted of enormous bears and more recently of a sort of panther which seems to me to be new. Unfortunately a journey of some twenty leagues beneath such a sun as one finds on the 34th degree of latitude had ripened this game to such an extent that, after taking great trouble to profit by it, I had to abandon the relics, not without vast regret. I wasted a great deal of time and money over this, and all to no purpose. It was the fault of the distance, the sun, and then the rains, which are taking their revenge for the unwonted drought of summer at the expense of the beauty of the autumn.

From Safapur, where I was camping when I closed my letter to Porphyre, I went to the far end of Lake Wular [Voulleur], at Bandipur (Bandehpoor). While I was there dissecting great beasts of the earth, air and water, I heard that a *vakil*, or envoy from the King of Little Tibet, had arrived in the vicinity of my camp simultaneously with a hill chieftain from the neighbouring country who was openly at war with the governors of Kashmir. The former, I heard, was bringing My Lordship presents from the King his master; the other had come merely to do homage to me, bringing two hundred of the hill-men with him, which I did not at all like. However, I put a good face on the matter and ordered that the Tibetan vizier and the Kashmiri chief should be kept waiting at a distance until I was ready to grant them an audience. I put on my European clothes again and seated myself majestically upon my chair beneath a sort of hurriedly rigged up canopy. Rugs were spread on the ground and a carpet by me for privileged persons. All my men drew themselves up in serried ranks on either side, most of them in rags of which you never saw the like in the streets of Paris. When I was satisfied with the arrangement of my court the Moslem officer in command of my escort went and summoned the Tibetan. Both in physique and in costume this plenipotentiary was a commonplace brigand of melodrama. He performed all the salaams before me that I had once made before the Great Mogul, and knelt as he presented the King's letter, written in Persian and full of the roses, narcissi and basil which bloom perpetually in the garden of his friendship for me, with which His Majesty's whole heart is filled. Ahmed Shah had received my reply to his first communication. This time he wrote that, to please me, he had caused a battue to be held in all his mountains, and that in spite of the time of year, which was so unpropitious for hunting, forty-two animals had been taken alive, most of them wounded, but that after a few days' captivity all of them had died, so he was sending me the only two that survived. His letter enumerated all the things he was offering me as a *khilat* or robe of honour. Well, this robe consisted of three great blocks of rock crystal, eight huge sacks of dried fruits, two young live antelopes,

and a piece of the stuff of which His Tibetan Majesty's clothes are made, woven from the down of one of these varieties of antelope. He described his envoy as having been his vizier for the last thirty years, his confidential servant and second self. Aga Chiragh Ali Shah, to deprive the strange diplomatic personage of none of his titles (*Agah* meaning chief; *chiragh*, torch; *ali*, sublime; and *shah*, king), was not long in informing me that he had a highly confidential mission as well; but since he saw me surrounded by spies, he told me that he had to consult me about a malady of the Rajah's. I requested him to describe it at once, so that I might have more time to meditate upon the remedy; but he told me it was a malady which could only be mentioned behind drawn curtains. This was not a bad dodge for removing all witnesses from a secret conversation. He has been back again since then for the same purpose, but not till after eating such a quantity of opium that he was unable to tell me anything, except that his master is passionately fond of the English (whom he has never seen, and who are three hundred leagues away from his wretched empire), that he is their very humble servant, that his country is theirs, etc., etc. I replied that I had a frenzied passion for Ahmed Shah, and was possessed by an inviolable friendship for him, garnished with all the tulips, narcissi and bouquets of roses imaginable.

Two men in my ambassador's suite had died of cold on the journey, another had a broken arm; one horse had fallen over a precipice . . . but Chiragh Ali Shah felt so much revived by the sun of my presence as to feel no doubt that, had he brought the dead men with him, they would have come to life again in my presence. In fact, he ground up enough local colour to satisfy the most exacting listeners.

After him the hill chieftain was introduced. He was a man of my own age, extremely handsome and with a remarkably gentle and smiling expression. I should have loved him with all my heart had it not been for the two hundred ruffians he had brought with him, and I still liked him exceedingly, in spite of this adjunct. However, I prudently hastened to assure him of my benevolent intentions towards him. I told him that I was the friend of the

oppressed and the promoter of peace; that I deplored the state of perpetual war and anxiety in which he lived, and that if he would promise me to keep the peace in future, I would ask Ranjit Singh to release one of his wives and a daughter of his who were captives in Kashmir. He told me his story, which touched me greatly, and when I see Ranjit Singh again I will certainly keep my word. But I am convinced that the best way for him to recover his wife and child would have been to carry me off prisoner into his mountains, and I am very grateful to him for allowing me to be the uncertain agent of their liberty, instead of seizing me as an infallible pledge of it, as he could have done. My original plan had been to visit his mountains, but I felt it would be imprudent to put his justice to the test any longer, so yesterday I decided to resume my circuit of the lake without entering any of the valleys that lead down to it. Dilawar Malik [Dellaveur Malik] (for that is my new friend's name) accompanied me as far as the shores of a broad torrent which forms the boundary of his disputed domain. In the interests of his own safety I should not have allowed him to come any further, and I was about to forbid him to do so when he dismounted for the purpose of taking leave of me. He told me with a smile that there were no guns so sure or with such a long range as those of the two hill-men who always march at his side, nor was there any sabre sharper than his, nor any horse more spirited. I shall never forget this figure, so handsome, good-natured and picturesque. Walter Scott could have imagined nothing better.

As for Aga Chiragh Ali Shah, he bears no resemblance whatever to a hero of romance, but is an adventurer whose tales would be amusing if they were less obscured by the fumes of opium. He is a native of Bombay, doubtless of Persian origin, for he is a Shiah by religion, and is white-skinned and of low extraction. My Indian servants learnt from him that he had formerly belonged to their own walk in life. After trying dozens of ways of making a living, and travelling from Persia to China, he was kept in Little Tibet by the present Rajah, who has really made him his favourite and minister. He is well known in Kashmir as the most influential

man in that country, and what is more, a very good sort, though a great intriguer. The man whom Ahmed Shah sent the first time has returned this time with Chiragh Ali, whose chief servant he is. He is far better versed in diplomatic wiles than his master, and I imagine the Rajah only sent his incomparable Aga Chiragh Ali Shah to do me honour and add greater lustre to his mission, while Nasim Khan, the servant, will come and report to me when he sees me alone. For this morning, as he was walking close beside my horse, he showed me the corner of a letter in his sabre-sheath, folded in the same way as Ahmed Shah's diplomatic messages.

I cannot make out what these people want of the English (for whose agent they evidently persist in taking me). Ahmed Shah is unique in his kind, a model king (though no citizen-king). He is much beloved of his subjects and feared by his neighbours. For the last few years he has emancipated himself from a sort of tribute (always more or less nominal, it is true) formerly paid by Little Tibet to China. His poverty and the fearful mountains separating his country from Kashmir make him absolutely secure from Ranjit Singh's ambition. In fact, for all my diplomatic genius, I cannot make it out! Meanwhile his ambassadorial suite is galloping or running in my train and has already learnt to collect plants and insects; and whether it has fulfilled its secret mission or not, as soon as ever the horseman I have sent to Kashmir for three hundred rupees has returned, the "sublime torch" of the empire of Little Tibet will receive his present and his dismissal at one and the same time. I have already sent a reply to Ahmed Shah, returning with interest all the flowers that bloom in the garden of his friendship. I am now going to write to Ranjit Singh and tell him all about it, for even if he is annoyed with Ahmed Shah, he has absolutely no means of injuring him. Nor shall I hide any of it from Lord William Bentinck either, for I am convinced that the political character absurdly assumed by M. Moorcroft in these parts, where he gave himself out, under the rose, as the fore-runner of an English conquest, has been openly and sincerely disavowed by the English Government. Ahmed Shah, whose king-

dom is at the ends of the earth, has not heard of this disavowal. M. Moorcroft undoubtedly made direct overtures to him, and now he persists in taking me for an Englishman who, like M. Moorcroft, is interested in something more than the rocks and animals of this land. M. Moorcroft's conduct is very much to be blamed; he discredited the good faith of the English in the eyes of Asiatics.

For my part, since I am innocent of all responsibility for Ahmed Shah's misconception, and have even done everything in my power to destroy it at the first sign of it I saw, I can easily console myself for his reluctance to abandon it; for without it he would never have constituted himself my zoological auxiliary. His blocks of crystal are of no scientific value, but in Kashmir it is made into vessels which are highly esteemed in the East; and I hope to drink coffee with you out of His Little Tibetan Majesty's cups. His royal cloth, which is far softer than cashmere, is being made into a roomy dressing-gown, in which I shall do honour to the munificence of Ahmed Shah, and in which you will afterwards do excellent work at your metaphysics in winter-time; for on my return I mean it to be yours. I shall be left with one of less striking beauty, but even at that, one such as no physician or metaphysician ever wore before. It is a present from my friend Mohammed Shah, the saint of Kashmir. I regret that I am unable to keep you one of the sacks of dried apricots from Ahmed Shah's garden. It is a pity to see them being devoured by men whose jaws are not much in the habit of exercising themselves on such delicacies. All these things are going to cost me twenty-five louis in obligatory presents to the ambassador; but I shall not regret these if my two animals, which are very young, will consent to live long enough to reveal the characters of their species clearly. After all, so far I am only staking part of my winnings, for I have more than a hundred louis left out of Ranjit Singh's rupees.

It would be absolutely impossible for any European of my profession to travel in this country in any other circumstances than those in which I came. I remember the advice kindly given me by people who had seen only a small corner of the East. According to them nothing was easier than to cross the whole of

Asia with masses of heavy baggage. "You just join the merchants' caravans" they would say, etc., etc. But that is all romancing. Merchants do go almost everywhere, it is true, but they make the journey from Kashmir to Teheran, and even to Meshed, by way of Lahore, Delhi, Bombay, Bushire, Shiraz, etc., etc., without passing through Kabulistan, and for good reasons. The petty princes of the East rob them, but with discretion, for they are likely to return, and, if allowed to keep some of the profits of their trade, they are like the miser's goose that laid the golden eggs for the chiefs through whose territories they pass; so few of these are such fools as to kill it. But anyone passing by with no intention of returning is stripped of his last rag, and European travellers naturally have no trader's privilege to which they can appeal. For them there are only two alternatives: either to go as beggars, like M. Alexander Csoma de Körös, wearing the national costume of the country they are traversing, or else to surround themselves with material forces that command respect, or obtain the backing of a material force which they do not themselves possess. Thus I set out on horseback from Calcutta on the evening of November 29, 1829, without the slightest direct protection; but at Hoogly, two days' march from there, I acquired a sort of janissary, who was replaced at Burdwan by a corporal and four men, and so I went on increasing on the snowball principle, till I reached the banks of the Sutlej with a sergeant and a dozen men and found fifty more waiting to receive me. Since then I have always had about the same number, though it has sometimes fallen short of full strength, and would have done so everywhere but for fear of the long arm of those powers whose friend I am believed to be. For the rest, there has been more luck than skill in my roving fortunes. For instance, had not chance brought the king of Little Tibet's envoy to my camp at the same time as the hill chieftain of whom I told you a few days ago, the latter would possibly have robbed me or taken me prisoner. But on shaking off the yoke of Kashmir he became the vassal of Ahmed Shah, and could not dream of injuring me in the presence of the latter's minister. To go still further back, it was the excellent M. Allard who heard

about me and sent me his offer of service from Lahore to Chinese territory. But for him I should never have got here; and this would have been impossible, again, without Lord William. In order that I might achieve it several people's goodwill had to be exerted on my behalf concurrently, one being the result of pure chance.

In these lands justice in one strong enough to be unjust is a miracle; so it is incomprehensible to their inhabitants at first, though they are not slow to understand and appreciate it. Throughout the whole viceroyalty of Kashmir there is no sort of tribunal for settling private disputes with any sort of equity, but during the last month people have come to me several times even from a distance, and asked me to act as arbiter between them. They talk of my *adalat* [*adoulat*] (justice), and this gives me the greatest pleasure. As for my wisdom, you may as well know that I have been promoted: Ranjit now addresses me as "*Aristotelis*", over and above our former allowance of *Aflatun* and *Bocrate*.

For about two months past my health has been perfect. I am still as thin as I used to be, but tougher and more sinewy than ever. As a proof of my strength I may tell you that I have several times spent an hour and a half swimming in still water without a pause, yet without feeling at all tired. I believe I could have kept this up for four or five hours, which was far more than Leander did. I still do not quite know how I should set about breaking five hundred heads with a single blow from the jawbone of an ass, but my secret is the same as Samson's. What hands are there here, good God! that could shear the fatal lock? I should like to see a chorus of Kashmiri peasant women make its entry upon the stage in one of our theatres before an audience composed of lovers of the exotic! Night is falling, and my servant is about to dispute half my table with me (and it is very small) so as to set my frugal dinner. Adieu, then. As I write to you so intimately about such wretched trifles, I feel as though nothing separated me from you but the Paris bridges, and this is a charming illusion which restores all my serenity of mind for serious work.

Adieu, once more adieu!

Rahma [Rahammah], morning of
September 8

Autumn has come with its cool nights and cold mornings. It is just like ours in fine years except for the sun, which is far hotter in the middle of the day and still almost vertically overhead. Yesterday evening I dismissed my brigand, who set out again for Little Tibet this morning with his whole suite. Immediately after dismissing him I wrote a long letter to Ranjit Singh. (You are probably cursing the inconsistencies in my spelling of Asiatic names, but they are very difficult, if not impossible to spell in our European languages, or at least in those which I can use. The English spell it Runjeet. We ought to spell it Ronnedgite, or Rannedgite, or Rernnedgite; but neither o nor a nor e will do, though o is the closest approximation to the Persian sound. As for the word which the English spell Singh, if they were to pronounce it in accordance with analogous sounds in their language, it would be spelt *singe*. The closest approach to it in French is *cygne* (*cycnus*). The name of this country is pronounced exactly like Cachemire in our language, or Cashmeer in English. Delhi is spelt by the English in a thousand different ways, none of them correct. The best would be Dellee in English and Delli in French. The present English fashion is to write Bunarus for the French Bénarès, but in French it ought to be spelt Bênièresse. As for the final *an* in Teheran, Ispahan, Burdwan, etc., etc., this sound, which is very easy for all Europeans to imitate, does not exist and cannot be represented by letters either in French, English or Italian. The *am* of the Indians and Persians, like their *an*, is unpronounceable for those who have not heard it from the lips of a native. The final *ghur* in many place-names on the English maps is a stupidly literal transliteration of the Persian; it is almost *gueur* in French, as in the word *liqueur*. *Gueur*, *abad*, *poor*, *nagueur*, all alike mean dwelling-place. Here I close the parenthesis.) Well, then, I have written in great detail to Ranjit Singh, describing my little adventure. I think my letter will amuse him. Part of its contents, at least, will, I am sure, be greatly to his taste. It consists of pills containing extract of cantharides. . . .

Sopur, September 10

Yesterday evening I received a courier from the king bringing me a direct invitation to join him. I might wait to be pressed, but this would be rather ungracious; and though I am vexed at leaving Kashmir ten days earlier than I had originally arranged, I am replying to His Sikh Majesty that in ten days' time I shall start out once more on my way back to the Punjab. I shall have to make rapid marches if I am to join Ranjit at Amritsar before he leaves for Rupar [Ropoor]. Look for this village on the left bank of the Sutlej at the foot of the mountains near Bilaspur. It is the place appointed for the interview between the Rajah and the Governor-General, which will take place on October 25 with all possible pomp. Wade and Kennedy both ask if I am going to be there. Certainly not. A poor devil of an *Aflatun*, *Bocrate* or *Aristotelis* like me would be stifled by the clouds of dust raised by contact between two such great powers.

Besides, the magnificence of the East is, after all, no more than a display of rich clothes, in which individuals count for absolutely nothing but dummies upon which to drape or button their magnificent costumes. So I shall leave the Rajah's court only to return into the hills in the direction of Kulu for the purpose of visiting the iron and salt mines of Mandi. Thus on my way back to Simla I shall have occasion to make the acquaintance of your beloved Bilaspur. Lord William has renewed through Kennedy every sort of offer of his services in facilitating whatever moves I may make during my coming campaign. From here I shall go to Amritsar by way of the pass of Pir Panjal [Pirpendjal], Rajaori and Jammu, where I shall pay a passing visit to Rajah Gulab Singh, who gave me such a welcome at Pind Dadan Khan last April. I am perfectly well, but up to the eyes in work, and cannot write to anybody to-day. Adieu, dear Father; I embrace you with all my heart, and Porphyre too.

(C.F. LXXIII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Djamou (Jummoo, on the English
maps [i.e. Jammu]), October 3, 1831

MY DEAR FATHER,

Here I am, down from the hills. I left Kashmir on September 19. The stupid Sikh who at present possesses the right to pillage that unhappy country (no doubt on condition of disgorging his loot into Ranjit Singh's treasury when his term of office is up) came to make his farewell call on me the evening before. He had brought me in the King's name a *khilat*, or robe of honour, worth fifteen hundred rupees (four thousand francs!). After his visit I went to call upon my neighbour Mohammed Shah Sahib, whose birth and reputation for exalted wisdom and sanctity made it possible for me to show him this politeness without lowering myself. There is no sort of courtesy which I have not received from this excellent man. I had almost to lose my temper on leaving him to make him keep a horse and a few pieces of porcelain which he wanted me to accept. The only thing I took was a very pretty, quite simple cup, out of which I shall have great pleasure in drinking my coffee in Paris one day. There are good people everywhere, and it is my good fortune to prove this by experience wherever I stay for any length of time. It will be a pleasure to look back upon them.

Though I had fixed the day of my departure a week in advance, my *mehmandar* Sheikh Badar Bakhsh was not ready. Though he is no worse than other Sikh officers, I hate him more than the rest because I know him better, owing to the time he has spent in my service. He had bought six women in Kashmir, three of whom he had married before the *mullah*, and what was keeping him in the city was the difficulty of transporting them across the

mountains. He asked for a day's grace, but I was inexorable; and on the 19th, as originally arranged, I mounted my horse at day-break and started southwards. My caravan was much larger than on my arrival. I had an escort of sixty soldiers, my baggage was borne by fifty hill porters, and a few captive animals were led behind. A confidential officer of my friend Mohammed Shah's rode behind me, and I was also followed by the Mogul who had acted as my secretary and *cicerone* during my stay. The day before I had presented him with twenty-five louis, which he well deserved for his excellent services; and the poor devil, to whom justice was a novelty, and who had, I believe, become sincerely attached to me, would have followed me anywhere. He hopes, with some prospect of success, that by presenting and recommending him to Ranjit Singh I shall improve his fortunes. Badar Bakhsh had assured me that he would rejoin my camp by the second day's march, and in a fit of forgetfulness I left all Ranjit Singh's firmans with him. But he did not appear on the second night or the third, and I doubt if he will rejoin me before Amritsar. It may have been rather rash of me to plunge into the mountains like this without a *mehmandar*, but in case any obstacles had presented themselves, I proposed to show the Maharajah's last letter, in which he pressed me to come to him. But this means of commanding respect has remained in my secretary's pocket without having to be used. It has so happened that the *parwanas*, or firmans, which I have myself addressed in my own name to the chiefs through whose territories I had to pass have secured me as good a reception as I could have wished. The Rajah of Rajaori, who was kept in bed by a painful malady, sent his eldest son to meet me and express his regrets and apologies for his inability to come himself. He gave me quarters in the most picturesque tower of his castle. This rajah is a unique exception, for he has a reputation for justice and learning. I paid him a visit quite informally and stayed for more than an hour sitting near him on his bed, talking and comforting him. I could do nothing more, for I had no medicines to give him or prescribe for him.

My original intention had been to descend straight across the

mountains from Rajaori to Jammu; but the rajah drew such a picture of the difficulties and insecurity of that route that I changed my plans and came to Bhimbar [Bimber], where I re-entered the plains of the Punjab. I had already found its climate at Rajaori, however, and even at Thanna, to which I had come straight down from the top of the Pir Panjal Pass in a day and a half's march. This sudden and enormous change of climate has not affected even so much as my skin, but several of my men have experienced the most serious consequences. At Rajaori one of my horsemen caught the terrible fever prevalent among the foot-hills, which always kills its victim after racking him with incessant pain for a year or two. My antelopes from Little Tibet died of the heat near Bhimbar. In order that I might not do the same, I left off my flannels and am finding it very pleasant by comparison to sweat in cotton clothes. The curious thing is that I do not find this Indian heat (for the Punjab is India) in the least overpowering, though everybody alleges it to be so enervating. It toasts my skin a little, as it would anybody else's, but internally I feel as fresh and vigorous as in the mountains of Kashmir, if not more so. To reach this place from Bhimbar in three days' march, I had to spend fourteen or fifteen hours in the saddle every day, besides which I stayed awake all night, for it would not have been safe to sleep. Ranjit Singh has never succeeded in subduing the tribes among the foot-hills in these regions. They often swoop down upon the neighbouring plains, frequently in very large numbers, imitating the exploits of Walter Scott's Scottish Highlanders and Fauriel's Klephts, and sparing none but their nearest neighbours, who, I think, go halves with them. Had I been aware of the risks of this route beforehand I should certainly have chosen another, for I can imagine nothing sillier for a man of my profession than to stop a bullet in some nocturnal affray and so die like a dog without a single flower laid upon his grave. I left these dangers behind me to-day on crossing the Chenab. I had reckoned upon finding Rajah Gulab Singh here, for I had written from Rajaori to inform him of my approaching arrival. I was therefore a little disappointed to learn on going up to Jammu that the Rajah had left his capital

two days previously and was camping ten *kos* along the road to Amritsar. However, since he was the man who was to lend me a large tent and camels for my journey to Ranjit Singh, I insisted upon coming on here. Gulab Singh is better obeyed at a distance than Ranjit Singh. His vizier received me as a friend of his master's. Everything I can desire appears as though by enchantment. My camp is a scene of plenty. Soldiers, servants and hill porters are all being entertained at the expense of the Rajah. The poor devils certainly needed to pass through this land of Cockaigne after the privations and fatigues they have endured since leaving Kashmir! The Rajah's eldest son, who stayed here to receive me in his father's absence, expressed a wish to come and see me yesterday evening the moment I arrived. He is a boy of fifteen, Ranjit Singh's favourite. I did not receive him till to-day. His charming face and modesty appealed to me, for I take the keenest interest in boys of that age, when they are ceasing to be children and what they are to be as men is about to be decided. I therefore promised young Gulab Singh that I would pass to-morrow here too, so as to spend the morning riding about with him on an elephant, seeing the country round Jammu and giving him a moral lecture in such a way that he does not notice it. The day after to-morrow, on my way to Amritsar, I shall call upon the father in return for his son's visit to me. Gulab Singh was expecting me by the direct route from Rajaori, so he had sent one of his viziers to meet me with a palanquin, porters and a small army. The young Rajah presented me with a purse containing three hundred and fifty rupees. Eight months ago I should have found such a proceeding very gross, but now that I am well trained in the customs of the country, I should have been quite offended if he had come empty-handed, just as I should have been if he had not left his shoes at the entrance of my tent. For the rest, I have grown completely indifferent to the pleasures of winning a prize in the lottery of Punjabi politeness, for money runs away as fast as it comes on this side of the Sutlej, and perhaps even faster.

To-day I traced a copy of my map of Kashmir and wrote in

all the names in Persian. I mean it as a present for Ranjit Singh.

On my way down from the Pass of Pir Panjal I was met by a courier from Ranjit bringing me a letter from the King and a packet from Simla as well, with one from Lord William Bentinck in reply to mine thanking him for the reception which his powerful recommendation to Ranjit had earned me. Lord William is pleased to allow me all the merit for my success.

Here is what he writes: I am copying his letter instead of sending it to you, for his writing is so illegible that I do not think you know English well enough to make it out.

"SIMLAH, September 5, 1831

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have not acknowledged the receipt of your last letter, for which I beg to apologize. It gives me great pleasure to find that your accueil by Rendjit-Singh has been so satisfactory. It must be mainly due to your own address. You have the *singular* merit of having, *at once* (*veni, vidi, vici*), conquered the distrust of that most wary politician. You must have suffered great fatigue and privation in the course of your present expedition. The thanks and applause of the scientific world will be your best reward—I was in hope Captain Kennedy had sent you our last intelligence from Europe, but I find that he made you but a partial report. I send you therefore a copy of what has been received from Bombay. I have also seen a letter from a friend of mine, but not addressed to me, who left Paris the 2nd week in April. He gives a favourable account of the stability of things in France, of which, my correspondent remarks, a less favourable opinion generally prevailed in England. We expect daily a ship which was to leave England on the 11th of May. We have also still to come the *Circassian*, that left England in the beginning of April, and which contains the missing French papers, which shall be forwarded to you as soon as received.—Lady William desires me to present her kind remembrances to you. I shall always be happy to afford you every assistance in my power.

"I remain with much respect and esteem, dear Sir, your faithful servant,

"W. C. BENTINCK"

With this letter Lord William enclosed a manuscript copy of a Russian gazette, which had come by way of Persia and contained the great news of the dissolution of the English Parliament and the continuance of armed peace in Europe. Is it not odd that, alone in the depths of the mountains of Kashmir, I should be better informed about the affairs of Europe than the inhabitants of Calcutta on the same day? European politics have not interested me so much for some time past, however. They hang fire too long.

This evening I gave judgment in a way that has given me the reputation of a Suliman [*Soulimán-ne*] (Solomon) at Jammu. My secretary complained that one of the soldiers in my escort had stolen his shawl. I did what the most insignificant writer in India or the Punjab never deigns to do in such a case: I went to the spot, thirty feet away from my tent. There I questioned both witness and accused, and easily convinced myself of the latter's guilt. The officer immediately enquired whether it was my good pleasure that he should be hanged or have his nose and ears cut off. My orders were that to-morrow, during my absence, before the assembled troops, a man of the lowest caste should break the guilty man's sabre and gun and give him a hundred strokes with a stick, after which my servant should give him a month's pay, so that he might leave the country; and he will be turned out with ignominy. I am afraid the rogue will immediately buy a sabre with the five rupees that he will receive after his thrashing, and become a highway robber; but if he does so at once, Gulab Singh's police have a good chance of catching him. So there my responsibility ends. There are no prisons in this country. I shall suggest to Gulab Singh the idea of establishing one in his territories and substituting forced labour for the cruel mutilations so frequently inflicted by *Oriental justice*.

Good-night, my dear father. The rest from Amritsar.



By kind permission of Monsieur Alfred Martineau

CHIEF LAMA OF KANAWAR

The light portions of the costume are yellow in the original
and the dark portions red

Jammu, evening of October 4

This, my dear father, is to thank you for your excellent and charming letter of last February, No. 24, which has just been brought me by a courier from M. Allard, together with one from Porphyre, a packet of quite recent newspapers from Calcutta and a letter from my banker, who has been authorized by MM. Delessert and Delaroche to credit me with an extra six thousand francs for this year and three thousand for last year, 1830, making nine thousand francs more for the current year; and to increase this sum to twelve thousand francs for the years 1832 and 1833. So I have got the fifteen thousand francs I wanted for this year.

Your No. 23 has been delayed, which makes a few passages in No. 24 obscure. I hope my letters from Upper Kanawar and from Spiti or Tibet reached you not long after the one from Simla and Chini, and that the rest of my correspondence up to this day will have confirmed your faith in my star. Seeing me so near Leh, or Ladakh—for it is all one on the map—you wanted me to push on to that point, so your ambition will have been a little disappointed on seeing me return from the upper valley of the Spiti without having called there; but you will have had pity on me in view of the cold and hunger I should have had to endure if I had persisted in going on, not to speak of obstacles of a different order. Pinkerton, whom you felt it your duty to consult under the headings of *Chinese Tartary* and *Tibet*, will no doubt have given you a very different idea of the lamas (pronounce this *lomm-mmmmmmmmma*) and terrible Tartars from what they really are. You seemed greatly to regret my inability to see Kashmir, so I hope I have behaved like an obedient son—now, haven't I? If you had only known all the difficulties of this journey, you would never have dreamt of my making it, but would have believed it to be absolutely impracticable. Many of my English friends who were in a position to have a very good idea of them, Kennedy for instance, did not believe I should succeed in getting to Kashmir, even when he knew I was at Lahore. I do not know who the modern traveller is to whom you refer, who gives the Kashmiris such a bad char-

acter. Forster is the only man who has been there since Bernier, fifty years before me, and only in disguise, and nobody had been there before wearing European clothes and travelling as a European. Yet Kashmir is very near English India—two hundred leagues away at most, and its fame has been a never-ceasing spur to the ambition of English travellers. I was forgetting M. Moorcroft, who died miserably a short time after leaving that country.

I laughed heartily at your conjectures about what means I must have employed to make the money necessary for my last year's campaign. The Great Mogul is not so great as you thought. He does not adorn anybody's hat with a bauble worth a thousand *écus*. Reduced to the condition of a mere stage king, he is careful not to dress those whom he honours with a *khilat* in anything but stage finery. But Ranjit Singh does things differently. I am quite ashamed of the enormous trunkful of Kashmir stuffs by which my baggage has been increased during the last seven months. Unless my money runs short during the rest of my travels, in which case they will be a considerable resource to draw upon, I do not know what I shall do with them. I should like to be able to bring them back to Europe with my animals, plants and rocks. There would be a present I should love to make to my friends' wives. But how should I get them through the customs? . . .

. . . My first care on returning to English India will be to write a long letter to the Jardin on the results of my visit to Kashmir. I have never had so little leisure as since crossing the Sutlej. Since then I have necessarily entered into a host of relations with the people of the country I was traversing, which a European traveller would have no occasion to form with those of English India, even if he wished to do so. This has meant many hours stolen from my work. Now it was a question of precautions which had to be taken for my safety, now of visits to receive or courtesies to be shown. I cannot travel in silence and unknown. Yesterday, for instance, I could not help wasting a couple of hours with the little Rajah in visiting the country round his capital. Alone and on horseback, I should have made this reconnaissance in under an hour. To-day, here I am camping near his father, Gulab Singh. As I was riding

quietly across the plain on my way here from Jammu (a distance of nine *kas*) examining through my spectacles every plant that came under my nose in order to distinguish which of them were new to me, one of Gulab Singh's officers came to meet me, bearing his master's compliments. I am now resting a moment while waiting for my breakfast to be served, and it is after midday, and I have been on horseback for six hours. Next will come the ceremony of the *mulakat* [*moulakate*], or visit from the Rajah, who is good enough to make the first call. This courtesy I shall have to return. If he does not go till late this will be almost impossible to-day, and so on. In India everything is different. There are some English officers who have served in India for fifteen years and travelled through nearly the whole peninsula without coming in contact with any of the people of the country except those in their service. Such a person as this—and they are extremely common in the European community which inhabits and governs India—would be eminently unfit to do what I shall soon have finished doing, that is, make his way in a country where everything does not lie open before him. When my caravan is back again in India, proceeding silently along the roads there, it will seem to me almost like a funeral in which I am the corpse, and I shall certainly find the change very pleasant.

Apropos of death and burial, plague is causing terrible ravages in Persia, especially in the southern provinces and those bordering on the Gulf. At Bombay, Madras and Calcutta the strictest sanitary measures are being taken against Arab boats from Bushire, Muscat and Jidda. So far this terrible disease has never appeared in India. The cholera-morbus is raging furiously in Benares and the towns on the banks of the Ganges below it: Patna, Dinapore, etc., etc.

In one of your previous letters you regretted that I had never taken my degree as doctor of medicine, so that I might add the weight of that distinction to any report I might write on the terrible malady of which India is the classic soil. But . . . I should really be as much embarrassed as Pariset was in speaking at all to the point about the plague in Egypt, and for the same reason,

which is, that I have not yet seen or had any opportunity of seeing a single case of cholera-morbus. I had the same disappointment in Santo Domingo and the United States over the yellow fever. I am reckoning upon a similar experience with regard to plague.

Jassar [Djesser], on the banks of
the Ravi or Hydraotes, evening
of October 8

It is not a letter I am writing you this time, my dear Father, but a diary. As I expected, the Rajah came and called upon me three days ago, rather late. We talked about his mountains, Kashmir, the immortality of the soul, steam-engines, then the soul again, the universe, etc. Gulab Singh took such a pleasure in these physics and metaphysics that we went on till fairly late at night by the light of My Excellency's torches and candles, which provided my Rajput philosopher with more than one simile and idea. I am distinctly fond of the fellow, and the reason is that he seems fond of me. The Rajah pressed me to stay a whole day with him, and I consented on condition that we should march by night to make up for the loss of the day-time. So the day before yesterday morning I called upon him in his tent as soon as he was up and we stayed there talking until they came and told us that preparations for the hunt were completed, for it had been arranged that we were to go hunting. Towers of boughs and leaves had been constructed in a neighbouring forest, and each of us climbed on top of one of them while the Rajah's horsemen entered the forest and drove the game towards us from all directions. I killed a wild boar. I cannot have been born with much of a hunter's soul, for this gave me hardly any pleasure at all, though it was the first piece of luck I had had with the genus wild boar. The Rajah's brahmin cooks, who had followed on horseback, improvised a really excellent Rajput breakfast from the products of the chase and served it up in two capacious baskets filled with little dishes made of leaves. Ranjit Singh himself has no other dinner-service.

Our Moslem servants and horsemen and some castes of the Hindus made off as fast as their legs would carry them when they

saw the roast wild boar appear, for they abominate it as much as they do the pig, a horror which is shared by the Rajputs of Hindustan (*sic*). I spent the day in the Rajah's camp a little way from the spot where we had been hunting, where some tents had been made ready for me to which he sent me his presents: an excellent and attractive white horse most gallantly accoutred in the Sikh fashion, and a *khilat* consisting of Kashmir shawls, etc., etc. I called to take leave of him and, as had happened the day before, enjoyed my visit so much that I should be there still had he not himself assisted me to mount when night approached. In the middle of the night I arrived at Zafarwal [Zafferval], where I had the pleasant surprise of meeting a European, the first I had seen for seven months. I was received at Zafarwal, where he was himself camping, by this Italian ex-officer,¹ a friend of M. Allard's, who had, like him, spent several years in Ranjit's service. He is the governor of this province, and showered me with friendly and gratifying attentions. He told me a host of things which no traveller in this country would ever find out. I had to spend the day with him yesterday. To-night he rode with me to a distance of seven *kos* from our camp, after which I pushed on alone to this place on the banks of the Ravi, which my caravan has just crossed. I shall cross it to-morrow at daybreak with my light troop, and the day after to-morrow I shall be at Amritsar, near kind M. Allard.

My Italian told me too much. If he had known me before and been at all desirous of my friendship, he should have left me in ignorance of the methods of command necessary in this unhappy and horrible country. No doubt Gulab Singh does even worse things; but he is behaving as his fathers did before him. I shall find it a real pleasure to continue my travels in India on Gulab Singh's horse, for he did not give it me in accordance with a mere rule of etiquette, but evidently as something by which to remember him. I ask you, is not this friendship with a semi-savage of the Himalayas most curious? I little thought of such a thing when I landed in Calcutta two years ago. . . .

¹ General Avitabile.

Between the Beas and the Sutlej, in
Captain Wade's camp, October 19

I spent a week at Amritsar with the excellent M. Allard. On the second day after my arrival I had an audience of Ranjit Singh, with nobody else present. Only guess what he offered me. . . . The viceroyalty of Kashmir! I laughed heartily at him and his offer, which was doubtless nothing but a trap laid in order to find out what I thought. I liked him even more than when I passed through Lahore, no doubt because of the fuss he made of me. I found that I had changed my name at the Sikh court, and that from having been "Jakmon Sahib Bahadur" I had become *Aflatun al zaman*¹ quite currently to everybody. Captain Wade arrived at Amritsar three days after I did, with two other officers whom I also know. He had come from the Governor-General to meet Ranjit Singh and escort him across his territories to the spot where the interview between the two potentates is to take place, at Rupar on the left bank of the Sutlej. I was very pleased to see him again. This was the season of the Feast of the Dasehra, at which I saw Asia in all its picturesque pageantry. Wade invited me to join him and since then I have shared in all the privileges enjoyed by the members of the English Commission. On the eve of the Feast the King paid me the polite attention of allowing me to see the famous Holy Tank of Amritsar, in the middle of which stands the Golden Temple where the *Granth*, or sacred book of the Sikhs, is kept. The fanaticism and madness of the Akalis, or warrior monks, with whom this holy place is always crowded would threaten almost certain danger to any European who was to visit it, unless he had a powerful guard; but this I did not lack. I rode to the temple with a strong escort of Sikh cavalry, on an elephant which pushed the terrible Akalis aside to right and left, though without hurting any of them, and the temple was occupied by a regiment of Sikh infantry. Within its precincts I visited an old man famous for his reputed sanctity. He was waiting for me, and by the King's orders the governor of the city, an old man who is equally respected, awaited me there too and conducted

¹ The Plato of the Universe.

me into the temple. He took me by the hand and led me everywhere like that. Had he let go of it the Akalis would no doubt have played me some nasty trick; but arm in arm with the aged Dessa Singh, I was sacred. The temple at nightfall, when it was already illuminated by lamps, was a perfect image of Pandemonium. I humbly offered the *Granth* a *naza* of three hundred rupees out of those which the king had sent me as a present the day before, and received in return rather a paltry *khilat*. The Dasehra is a Hindu festival, the greatest of them all. The Sikhs celebrate it with even more noise and brilliance than their Hindu ancestors and brethren do. It is the day on which Ranjit reviews his whole army. In my capacity as a temporary diplomat I went and sat with Wade near the King in a magnificent tent erected on a platform in the middle of the plain of Amritsar. All the noblemen of the Sikh court came to do homage to the King, after which the army filed past before us. It was very like the armies described by the historians and poets of antiquity. This time the reality enormously surpassed my expectation.

On the following day (that is, the day before yesterday) the King broke camp at daybreak and left with Captain Wade. I could not part with M. Allard in time to join the royal procession on the road, and did not reach Wade's tent till evening. From this point onwards I shall not leave him again, for fear of getting lost in the appalling *mêlée* before which the King appears to be in flight, though it is really following him against his wish.

Yesterday morning *Aflatun al zaman* rode along on an elephant side by side with Ranjit Singh, discoursing with him like an oracle. Since there was not the smallest growing plant to be gathered on the scorched and sandy plains which we were crossing, I did not regret my inability to stop when the fancy seized me. To-day, however, I imagined I had caught sight of one, so without the least ceremony I made my elephant kneel and got down to have a closer look at a plant, which, on seeing it better, I recognized and left alone. Everybody else came to a halt with me. You see that *aflatuns* have great privileges!

I must not forget to tell you that at Amritsar I received two

letters, both equally long and friendly, one from M. Pearson and the other from M. de Melay. The former tells me that he is shortly expecting his daughter, who has completely recovered her health and is returning, without Madame Pearson, to keep him company in Calcutta for the rest of the time he has to stay there.

Hateli [Hatteli] in the mountains between the Beas and Sutlej
October 28

On the evening of the 21st, at Hoshiarpur [Ouchiarpoor], I took a final leave of my beloved Ranjit Singh. During the morning's march, as I rode along by his side on my horse, we talked of my proposed visit to Mandi, which I am now carrying out, and he had the candour—not a common virtue of his—to confess that the petty Rajah of Mandi is the most recalcitrant of his Rajput hill vassals. He is always obliged to send an army of from eight to ten thousand men every spring to collect his paltry tribute of a hundred thousand rupees. However, he held out a hope that with a little adroitness, his firmans to the Rajah, and the assistance of an old Sikh officer, a confidential man of his whom he had added to my escort, I should succeed in my enterprise. Our last interview was long and extremely amiable. Ranjit made the greatest fuss of me. He took my hands and pressed them several times, on receiving my richest broadsides of flattery, into which I introduced a little feeling without deliberate effort. I was embarrassed to find from his neglect of the English officer in command of Wade's escort, who was calling upon him with me, that his attentions were all for me; but the English are so awkward with Asiatics, and so unsociable, that I was not surprised. They have no reply to make but "yes" and "no"; and Ranjit likes to be amused. I did not part with the King till it was black dark, leaving him all my best wishes for fame and prosperity in this world and the next—if it exists—and taking away with me a magnificent *khilat* in exchange for these golden words. On returning to my tent I found that the King had sent me a further present of five hundred rupees. I then supped with Wade for the last time, and he gave me a firman from his own hand for the Rajah of Mandi, who will, I

hope, pay attention to it, for he is near the English frontier.

I can assure you, it took all my love of rocks to make me leave the pleasantness and safety which I found in his company and plunge back again into the mountains all alone. I expected to meet with some difficulties, and there has been no lack of them. As early as my third day's march I had to go through the Papal States of the Punjab, a small mountainous district belonging to and inhabited by a centenarian, the spiritual head of the Sikhs, who not long ago, in a fit of rage with his eldest son—an ambitious young fellow of eighty—rose to his feet and without a word of warning chopped off his head with a single blow of his sabre. Out of policy Ranjit lavishes every mark of respect upon this terrible old man. I had reckoned to appease this Cerberus by throwing him a sop in the shape of a hundred rupees or so; but I was obliged to go round his fortress without being allowed to enter it, for fear I might contaminate it. And while I was camping a few leagues further on, near the last village before his frontier, orders were brought me to evacuate His Holiness's territory as quickly as possible. Since his heralds were some fearsome Akalis, carrying long matchlocks with the matches already lighted, I did not wait to be told a second time. So I went on and took up my quarters in a valley separated from that one by a small mountain range. There I thought I was in friendly territory, for I was quite near one of Ranjit's son Sher Singh's fortresses. But on the following morning, as I was about to mount my horse and continue on my way, my old Sikh officer, Kaja Singh, showed me with some embarrassment a band of about twenty ruffians posted opposite my camp with their guns on their shoulders, blocking my way. My horsemen proposed to ride them down and spit them on the end of their lances, a foolish suggestion which I rejected with a shrug of the shoulders. Instead of this I wrapped myself in my magnificent dressing-gown of white flowered Kashmir stuff, settled myself comfortably in my armchair, and prepared to smoke my cigar and drink my drop of brandy as a preservative against the fever prevalent in these mountains. In this comfortable position I conducted diplomatic negotiations with my enemies. Eight

months ago this adventure would have made me most uncomfortable, but I was used to such ways by now, and saw perfectly well that it was nothing but one of the most ordinary commonplaces of Punjabi manners. One day, when we are sitting at our fireside, I will tell you the details of these negotiations; suffice it to say for the present that, after much parleying with my two officers, the enemy leader decided to approach me. I complimented him on his vigilance and ordered him to summon all his men, who received the same praise; then, to their great surprise and astonishment, I mounted my white horse with a majestic and patronizing air and lightly waved them farewell. They responded with a most respectful salaam, stammering some excuses (I do not yet know why), and stood watching my departure, as bewildered as a flock of geese, while my baggage went by in front of them. After this I advanced for three days like a conqueror, and arrived here. But at this point I had to stop and open negotiations with the Rajah of Mandi, who will, I think, reply to my diplomatic communication this evening. His capital is fifteen leagues away and it is there I have had to send Ranjit and Wade's firmans, besides the one which I have had the impudence to write him on my own account. Only fourteen leagues from here is Bilaspur. Having learnt of my approach—by what means I do not know—the Rajah of Bilaspur sent me an officer of his wretched little court with twenty soldiers. His vizier will receive me six leagues from his capital, on this side of the Sutlej; so that if I fail at Mandi, which would be most regrettable from the geological point of view, I shall at least have a good line of retreat straight towards Bilaspur. I confess that I shall be glad to cross the Sutlej again. Not that I should not be willing and ready to begin this year's campaign all over again, even with my present knowledge of the certain difficulties and possible dangers of travel on this side of the river. But if one of my friends wished to repeat it, I confess that at times I should feel some anxiety until he returned to the bosom of the English possessions. Is this courage or presumption on my part? I do not know; but I think I can distinguish a touch of superstition in my sense of security. I have confidence in my own adroitness in getting out of a tight

place, and trust my good star not to lead me into many very bad ones; but I should not have the same confidence in the luck and presence of mind of another person of whom I was fond. After all, what I have just done (for all danger is over now) only one man has attempted before, M. Moorcroft; and he never came back—some say as the result of fever, others of poison. But I learnt for certain in Kashmir that he died miserably of sabre and gunshot wounds, together with one of his companions.

I have certainly exhausted all my chances of Indian adventure in the Punjab and the hills, and I am glad of it. For one who is travelling light, adventures may be a most interesting distraction; but for a poor devil in my profession, who has plenty of work to do, they are a most inconvenient accessory.

I feel a most pleasing sense of satisfaction as I look back upon the ground I have already covered with so much success and good fortune. I have fulfilled half my task, and that the one presenting most difficulties in the shape of human obstacles. With the exception of the first summer, which I spent in the steam-bath of Calcutta, I have had no cause for anything but pleasant surprise at the climate of the places where I have dwelt since, thanks to travelling in the plains during the winter and the hills during the summer. From this point onwards this will no longer be the case. I shall have to be prepared to sweat frightfully during the coming summer in Bombay, after which, as I approach Cape Comorin, the winter will hardly be perceptible. But I feel that my constitution has grown tougher in the Himalayas and will only droop gradually under the enervating influence of the damp heat of Malabar. I shall be prudent. I shall buy twenty francs' worth of shade a month in the shape of a very large parasol, which I shall have made for me in Delhi and which will be held over my head constantly by a servant walking or running beside my horse. I shall buy another big double tent, so that I always find one of that sort ready pitched every day when I dismount. And if I am still sweltering, in order to refresh myself mentally, at least, I shall think of the scenes of ice and snow on the lofty summits of the Himalayas. Adieu.

Sabathu, November 22, 1831

I was not yet at the end of my adventures when I wrote these last pages at Hateli nearly a month ago. In order to get to Mandi I had to force my way past some sentinels. I could not understand their opposition, for the Rajah had sent me a pressing and humble invitation to visit his capital. He gave me literally *carte blanche* to do as I liked with his subjects, placed his vizier at my orders, etc., etc. I suspected some treachery on the part of the latter, and since he had not many followers compared with my train, the idea came into my head more than once that I might arrest him and thus secure his person. As I went on forcing my way past more and more guards, deputations kept arriving from the town imploring me not to press on any further. They assured me that they were sent by the Rajah and promised that their master would come and visit me next morning, at whatever distance from the town I might wish to camp. I thought they were all mad, so took no notice of their prayers or remonstrances and arrived at Mandi in the evening. The whole town was in a turmoil, yet I was received not only as a friend, but as a master. The mystery became more and more inexplicable. At last, when I had settled down in camp in the tents prepared for me by the Rajah, an old man came to see me, his uncle, and said in a piteous voice that it was an unlucky day, the astrologers having discovered in the morning that if my interview with the Rajah were to take place that day, appalling calamities would ensue for the monarchy of Mandi.

This was November 1. I spent several days at Mandi or near by, quite embarrassed by the Rajah's humility and hospitality. I was simply compelled to accept a few *naxas*. The money I refused, but he handed the bags he had brought over my head and distributed them to the crowd which thronged my camp when he came to visit me. I saw his mines, which turned out to be full of geological interest, and after confounding great and small for some days by the depth and wonders of my knowledge, I left Mandi on the 7th, riding a pony of the most wretched appearance, but belonging to

the most noble breed of Kulu, a present from the Rajah which he had forced me to accept.

Inwardly reviling the costly magnificence of my stables, which were now increased to four horses, I arrived at Suket [Sookeitt], where my camp had been set up. The first man to meet me was a groom, holding one finger of his left hand in his right. The poor fellow was covered with blood, and it was Gulab Singh's stallion which had treated him thus cruelly. With no more deliberation than Candide displayed when Issacar and the grand inquisitor interrupted his interview with the fair Cunégonde, I took aim with my gun, which I happened to be carrying, and stretched the fearsome beast on the ground stone-dead. On the day before I had had such serious differences of opinion with it that I had dreaded some accident to the man in charge of it. Having meted out justice to his enemy, I bound up the poor fellow's wound. In a few days' time it will have healed and he will then be dismissed for lying, for on entering my service he alleged that he had been a groom before. However, to console him as far as I can for the loss of his finger, he will at the same time receive two years' wages, that is, a hundred rupees.

On the 9th I crossed the Sutlej—with a joy which I can hardly express. I felt as though it were only one step from Bilaspur, where I disembarked from my inflated goatskin, to the Rue de l'Université. The young Rajah, who, as a result of some piece of rascality, had recently been the subject of an enquiry on the part of my friend M. Clerk, political agent at Ambala, hastened to pay his respects to me. He hoped that he might get me to intercede with M. Clerk for him, but all he received was a severe admonition and he retired quite crest-fallen.

Since the whole of my trans-Sutlejian suite had now ceased to be of any use to me, I dismissed my men, each with a sum proportionate to his services. This cost me some thousand rupees. Next the soldiers in my escort obtained the promotion which their general, M. Allard, had granted them at my request. Ismail-Beg received his captain's commission, etc., etc., etc. My Kashmiri secretary, who had been so very useful to me, received the best

treatment, as was only right. They all expressed their gratitude and regret at leaving me, in a way that touched me deeply. You know, my dear father, that on these occasions I am not brave. I had quite a lump in my throat. Without waiting for everybody to say good-bye and pray to Allah and Mohammed for my happiness, I mounted my horse and rode off so fast that nobody could follow me.

I was galloping along the road to Sabathu towards Kennedy's house when one of his couriers brought me a letter saying he was waiting for me at Simla. I made all the haste I could and arrived beneath his hospitable roof on the third day.

He was not alone. I found a few acquaintances there and made a fresh one, M. Maddock, one of the most distinguished men in this country. He has just left the residency of Lucknow for that of Katmandu, and ought to have started for that place already. May I say that it was on purpose to make my personal acquaintance that he was still staying with Kennedy, in defiance of his instructions, because he knew I was expected any day? The cold drove us out of Simla four days ago, but M. Maddock will stay with us at Sabathu as long as I am there. For my part I shall have to summon up all my courage and unsociability if I am not to stop there as long as he will prolong his stay, for I like him as much as he likes me.

However, I have given the necessary orders for camels, and as soon as they arrive at Bar, at the foot of the hills, I shall start for Delhi. Lord William Bentinck has been detained at Karnal by serious indisposition and will probably be in the imperial city still when I arrive there.

The excellent M. Allard has written to me since the interview between the Governor-General and Ranjit Singh at Rupar. He found a number of my friends in the English camp, who received him with the greatest distinction. He is enchanted at the honours he has received on this side of the Sutlej, and especially at those shown him by milord William. Nothing is better calculated still further to increase the high esteem he so justly enjoys at the Sikh court. As his friend and fellow-countryman I was genuinely

happy to hear all this, and it was an extra source of pleasure to me to think that I have been of considerable service to him on this occasion, in spite of being so far away.

Good old General Cartwright has just been summoned to Calcutta as witness in a criminal case, so this time I shall be free to go to M. William Fraser in Delhi without offending anybody, and pass the time with him that I shall have to spend in that city getting all my collections for Paris shipped down the Jamna. On December 30 or 31 I shall leave the imperial city and start my march to Bombay, but I shall be writing to you before then.

Adieu, my dear Father. I wish I could send you some health, for I have enough and to spare; but I hope you have no need of anybody else's. I am overwhelmed with work, so I am writing to nobody else this time but M. Victor de Tracy.

A boat from Bordeaux which sailed on August 4 is announced as having arrived in the Bay of Bengal. I hope it will bring me letters from you. I have had none since February, and those seem very old. I embrace you with all my heart.

35

(C.F. LXXV)

To M. Prosper Mérimée, Paris

Sabathu, in the English Himalayas
near the Sutlej, November 28, 1831

It is a long time since I wrote to you, my dear Prosper, but you have been even more negligent yourself.

I have probably come to the end of my adventures. They are such a rarity on this side of the Sutlej that from this time on I have not much chance of coming across any. I had no lack of them outside the English possessions; but since none of them had an unpleasant issue, in spite of the dubious preamble to some of them,

I do not regret having become acquainted with the oriental unpleasantnesses of the roving life.

On my way back from Kashmir, at Amritsar, I saw the Feast of the Dasehra, probably the most magnificent in the whole of the East. I have the credit of having refused the most picturesque of viceroyalties, that of Kashmir, with a salary of two *lakhs* a year (five hundred thousand francs), according to some a piece of folly, and according to others an act of eminent wisdom, worthy of the "*Aflatun al zaman, Bocrate, Aristun el Feringhistan*", etc.

My refusal, dictated by prudence, has brought me a still more exalted reputation for wisdom. Since then Ranjit has regarded me as an animal of an absolutely peculiar species, for whom no honour could be too great. If ever you think fit to cross the Rhine or the Indus for the purpose of writing nice exotic tales, you may count upon my protection, my dear fellow.

In spite of the crescendo in Ranjit's attentions, I none the less find it charming to be back among the perfidious islanders. My host at the moment is a nice fellow, the most highly paid artillery captain in the sublunary world, a king of kings even more than Agamemnon was, with no Achilles to resist him among all the little hill rajahs, his vassals. One regiment of Gurkhas maintains his absolute sovereignty from the Jamna to the Sutlej. This morning he politely held a great review in my honour, with firing exercise, etc., etc., to show me that he knew something about his purely incidental profession as colonel of infantry, a point which I had challenged. But he insisted that I should attend it on horseback, in the full dress of an *Aflatun*, that is, European evening clothes, for he meant me to receive all the honours due to a general inspecting his corps. I spent the time during which the review lasted in almost falling off my horse; and when my gunner had put his thousand ruffians through all their tricks, he wound up by marching them all straight towards the flag which served as a saluting-base. As his men presented arms and he saluted me with his sword, he shouted: "Now, Jacquemont, take off your hat and make a speech!" He was chaffing me, but I returned the compliment with interest. With the greatest imperturbability,

and in the tone of voice appropriate to speeches at inspections, I started on a nonsensical rigmarole in English, which so much upset his gravity that he made them beat the drums and break ranks without waiting for the end of it. After eight months of absolute solitude I find any gaiety good, even that of the English. I probably see most of them to better advantage than you did. I have a remarkable success with them, though, after all, there is not much satisfaction to the vanity in this. They are so bored all alone by themselves in their remote stations that any fresh face is a piece of good luck to them.

Those of them who remain bachelors, especially in India, have a way of living that is not the same as our *bonhomie*, but from thirty to fifty they are far more of *good fellows* than we are. Two other friends are sharing Captain Kennedy's hospitality besides myself: a brother gunner and the ex-resident of Lucknow, the biggest job in India.

I do not know how "we do manage it", but we are carried out every evening choking with laughter.

36

(C.F. LXXVII)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Basi [Bussi], in the territory of the
protected Sikhs, 24 miles north of
Ambala, December 5, 1831

In the first place, my dear fellow, excuse the thickness of my paper. I have only to be in a talkative mood for this letter to weigh a kilogram. But as it is John Bull who pays from here to Calcutta, and our own esteemed public from thence to Paris, it does not much matter. Besides, I have no choice.

The extreme slowness of our correspondence is the very devil. The only compensation for this annoyance is its safety, since we

have adopted the plan of sending letters through the Ministry of the Navy.

Let us start with business matters.

I very much regret that the ministerial decision of October 1830, granting me an extra sum of four thousand francs annually, was not carried out to the letter, but that its execution was confined to the last quarter of that year, which makes only nine thousand francs in all; for sending off my collections will cost a great deal of money, and my 1832 campaign will be very costly. I have just realized that I owe three months' wages to my men and eight months' to others. I shall suffer for this when I get to Delhi, where I shall also have to buy a horse. At present I have three. One is my so-called Persian horse, which has carried me from Calcutta as far as this, a brute which threw me some thirty times before I even got to Benares, and ate more than twice its value during the six or seven months of idleness it enjoyed on the plains in 1830 and 1831, while I was in the hills. Then the Rajah of Mandi's famous *ghunt*, an excellent beast of its kind, but I have really no use for it on the way to Bombay, so I am getting rid of it too. And lastly, my cavalry charger, which I have been riding since Lahore, has lost its nice manners. It is always rearing, and its mouth is ruined; besides, like all horses that have belonged to Punjabi noblemen, it is in the habit of eating nothing but sugar, so it costs me twice as much to feed as another would. So I shall send it back to M. Allard.

Now the least it can cost me to replace them all is twelve or fifteen hundred francs—and even that only because I am not proud; for if I wanted to choose a horse from one of the Company's cavalry regiments, I should have to pay eight hundred rupees, or two thousand francs, the price for which officers are allowed to make their selection. There are two remount dépôts near Delhi which my friend William Fraser knows inside out, and I have asked him to get me what I want there.

I put M. Allard to a good deal of expense, and since, in spite of his pay of a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand francs a year, he is no richer than I am since the bankruptcy of M. Palmer (the

most celebrated banker in Asia, who failed at Calcutta twenty months ago for the modest sum of seventy-five million francs), I was thinking what present I might give him, when it occurred to me that I might simply send him a lottery ticket, which costs me a hundred and twenty-eight rupees, and may win him a hundred and sixty thousand. I may say that there is a lottery at Calcutta every six months, with six thousand tickets costing a hundred and twenty-eight rupees each, so arranged that only a twelfth part of the sum subscribed for the tickets remains in the bank. This sum serves to cover the expenses of various charitable institutions. But that is only a pretext to sanctify the gambling and enable the pious to take part in it, which they all do, and the impious as well. The number of civil and military officers in the whole of India amounts to about six thousand, the same as the tickets. There are few who do not voluntarily impose this half-yearly tax of a hundred and twenty-eight rupees upon themselves from the day they arrive in India to the day they leave it. Between ourselves, when I sent for a ticket for M. Allard, the idea occurred to me that I might do as the others do and buy one for myself, too, out of my good friend Ranjit Singh's rupees.

But now I am in a great quandary, and you will certainly laugh at the cause of it. I feel that I cannot fail to win the first prize of six hundred thousand rupees, or at least the second, of eighty thousand, that is, either five hundred thousand or two hundred and fifty thousand francs. What the devil am I to do with the money? If I send it to you, I shall be asked when I get home: "Where did you steal that money? What Rajah have you been fleecing?" etc., etc. So I am praying that I may draw a blank.

The only consideration which could possibly clear me in the public eye and induce me to admit the origin of my income of twenty-five thousand *livres* without the least embarrassment is that of the hundred and twenty-eight rupees with which I baited my hook; which, as is only right, come out of one of those monstrous bags sent me from time to time by Ranjit Singh. There is no greater lottery than the favour or caprice of an Asiatic prince. It won me some twenty thousand francs without my

seeking a sou; so it is certainly permissible for me to risk a fraction of them in order to win something better. To hoard money obtained in such a way would be like rising from the gaming-table with one's winnings intact (*faire charlemagne*). . . . But enough of this nonsense!

M. Maddock fell ill at Kennedy's while I was sharing the Himalayan gunner's hospitality with him. I took possession of the patient, purged him, gave him emetics, quinine clysters (a horrible thing to an Englishman) and mustard plasters, rubbed him with camphorated oil, etc., etc., and soon set him on his feet again. There was no time to be lost. He had caught hill fever, which is almost endemic in the hot, damp lower valleys all round Sabathu. It is a pleasure to put oneself out for people who are grateful! If I were going to Nepal instead of Bombay, I can assure you I should have a splendid welcome, for the resident at the court of Katmandu is M. Maddock, my ex-patient.

I have also taught Kennedy to cure himself without a doctor of the indispositions to which he is a little subject. The fact is, I consider myself a better Indian doctor than most of the Company's physicians. On meeting any of them who were educated men, I have never talked to them about anything but their profession, thereby profiting by their experience, while for my own part my camp has provided me with somebody to treat every day, especially this year, when I always had so many people in it. So you may set your mind at rest about me and rest assured that, if I happened to fall ill, I should dose myself as successfully as anyone else. The cholera-morbus is a myth. I have never seen it, and am prepared to astonish people in Paris when they enquire about it. Again, on crossing to this side of the Sutlej, I have left behind all chance of seeing a woman burnt, or burning herself. But since cholera is no joke in Europe, let me say a word about it seriously. It sometimes attacks the great Indian cities, causing fairly extensive ravages among the native population: Europeans rarely fall victims to it, especially "gentlemen", but the soldiers in the European regiments, all Irishmen and all ruined by drunkenness, succumb to it in large numbers. You see that it does not affect me

in the least. Moreover, it goes without saying that if it were pleased to hold sway in Bombay next spring, I should not vie with it by stopping in the city, but should stay somewhere else a respectful distance away.

When the time comes I shall try to profit by your advice about the desirability of returning to Europe during the hot season. As a matter of fact the prospect of Paris in winter rather ruffles my equanimity. Here, on the flat plain of India at a latitude of 30° , with orange-trees and date-palms all round me, sugar-cane, banana-trees, mango-trees and other tropical products, I am writing to you by my fireside in a rickety shack built for the convenience of the invalids on their way to Simla in search of cold weather. Yet I am wearing my white bear's disguise from Tibet, with flannel underneath and a long Kashmir sash outside; and though it is noon, without a cloud in the sky, and I am in a house, or rather, a house of a sort, I am huddled up beside the fire. Dressed like this I went on foot half the time this morning because my feet were too cold on horseback. This chilly tendency is excellent in a poor devil who is marching with his nose turned towards Cape Comorin; but if it were to continue after that, I should have to sport a puce quilted silk gown in Paris, at the risk of being taken for an abbé.

I left Sabathu the day before yesterday afternoon, and if you look at the map you will see that I kept up a good pace in the valley of Pinjore, which I traversed without any evil effects, in defiance of the quartan fever which flourishes there almost all the year round. To make up for the time I lost at Sabathu (M. Maddock does not call it wasted!) I shall go to Ambala to-morrow. Twenty-four English miles or ten leagues post are a very long day's march in India. You would share my views on this subject, which are those generally held, if you were to see the galled backs of the famished camels which carry part of the baggage, and the carts and oxen which draw the rest; if you knew the necessity for opening, untying and moving it all every evening, and closing and tying it up again in the morning, etc., etc., etc. At this season everything works as though by enchantment, for the weather is

usually as fine as can be; but when the rain comes, it means misery and disaster. You have had a taste of it in your profession, so I spare my comments.

It is speculation in indigo that is ruining all the business houses in Calcutta. If they would only be content with the profits they make on commission, they would all do very well. I am always glad when I hear that Messrs. Cruttenden, Mackillop & Co.¹ do not go in for that form of gambling.

My only objection to them is due to my consciousness of the quantities of debts that will never be paid them. Nothing is so common in India as to owe fifty or a hundred thousand rupees, or even twice that. The debtors are often captains at six hundred rupees a month, or surgeons with a thousand or twelve hundred; and it is all due to the mania for living beyond their means. The principle on which the public acts is that the Calcutta bankers are a set of thieves, and it serves them right to be cheated. These Englishmen, who are so proud and sensitive about their honour, allow themselves to be dragged before the courts at Calcutta for debts that are really shameful, for there can be no excuse for them but the insanity of the debtors.

Their reasoning is as follows:—

"I am an '*English gentleman*', that is to say, one of the most brilliant animals in all creation.

"I have left the joys of Europe, the charms of family life behind me; I have said farewell to my friends to come and live in this dog of a country.

"*Ergo*, by way of compensation I have the right to have excellent food, drink, clothes, lodging, carriages, etc., etc.

"And if my pay is insufficient, I shall run into debt in order to cope with this necessity."

In the eyes of the majority of them, an "*English gentleman*" who drank water would lose caste and become a pariah, just as a Hindu would do if he were to drink a glass of wine, or a Moslem if he ate a slice of ham. I am bound to believe that the same is true in England. The "*gentlemen*" on the other side of the Channel need

¹ Jacquemont's bankers.

a sharp lesson in politeness from the lower classes, to teach them that a gentleman may eat a bad dinner without dying of it, and wear a coat that has been turned without getting the mange. For the rest, there is trouble coming from that quarter. You and I shall live to see the bomb explode. The abolition of the rotten boroughs will be of no more avail than Catholic Emancipation in Ireland. What the Irish needed before anything else, and especially before equality of political rights, were potatoes to eat. Emancipation did not put a single one into their mouths. What the English people lack to-day is bread. They are easy-going enough to believe that a reformed Parliament will give it them, a folly and a mistake of which they will soon be cured by experience of its new electoral laws. I would not exchange the future of France for that of England thirty years hence.

Lest our gazettes may make a mountain out of what is only a molehill in Calcutta, let me tell you that a band of ruffians, fakirs, beggars, homeless and workless men, all Moslems to boot, recently sacked a few villages on the left bank of the Hooghly [Ougli]. They thrashed the *barkhundaz* [*burkhondaz*] and *chokidars* [*tchaokidars*] (the police and rural guards) of the district, and their numbers swelled to at least two thousand, armed with sabres, pikes, cudgels and matchlocks. A regiment of infantry (Indian) was sent against the *mullabis* [*moulabis*] (the religious title assumed by the robbers) with some hundred horsemen and two pieces of light artillery. A number of them were killed and taken prisoner in the first encounter, and a second attack will do the rest. All this was going on some ten or twelve leagues from Calcutta.

Adieu, dear Porphyre. What a splendid thing these bad dinners are that I eat on the march: a fowl as tough as a bit of wood, coarse pancakes, and water to drink! After two days of this frugal fare I am once more the man I was before spending a fortnight with Kennedy, who would certainly have made me ill if I had stayed with him any longer. The English have no conversation; they sit at table for hours on end after dinner, in company with quantities of bottles which are constantly going the round. How can one help drinking? Lack of occupation alone may lead one to drink.

I smoked like a chimney so as to let the bottles go by without diverting them from their elliptical orbit round our oval table. But I had perforce to howl with the wolves. This meant that I slept heavily. On the following day my ideas were sluggish; I had to gallop for a couple of hours, as the English do, if I was to succeed in digesting and precipitating yesterday's dinner. I have therefore resolved to keep to my barbarous ways when I happen to drop anchor in some haven of English civilization, and drink my water and milk and eat my griddle-cakes among guests who will smile at the sight of my bad food. What a pleasure it will be, old fellow, to bid farewell to this way of living, when we are all united once more at our old father's little round table, ready to do our duty by a good soup, a leg of mutton and a few bottles which have had the patience to await my return in the cellar! . . .

37

(C.F. LXXXIII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Delhi, December 26, 1831

MY DEAR FATHER,

May I tell you that your speculations on Indian politics are among my minor diversions? Your quotations borrowed, from memory, from the Sieur de Marlès about the history of Ranjit Singh are delicious.—But is it seemly for a son to speak to his father like this? I have no doubt you will forgive me this licence now that you have certainly become better informed about affairs beyond the Sutlej and the fallibility of your oracle M. Marlès, thanks to my letters from the Punjab and Kashmir. I have all the material for a history of the Punjab during the last fifty years; but it would amuse nobody. The biography of Ranjit Singh might possibly be amusing, but it abounds in facts impossible to write down in the vernacular, which would require to be put in Latin

notes. Yet in spite of all that is reprehensible in Ranjit, do love him a little for my sake. You were afraid he might find me a wife and keep me there *volens volens*. But I am glad to think that you must long since have received my first letters from Lahore, which will have reassured you entirely on this score.

But what was this war of Ranjit's that was making you tremble for me? The Rajah of Bilaspur would be greatly flattered if he knew that the disturbances in his empire had alarmed you so much. If I were to see the Himalayas again, I hope you would do me the honour to believe that I should be absolute lord and master at Bilaspur.

I have lost the thread of European politics, and cannot prophesy as I did in the past. Did I tell you that, six months before hearing of them, I foretold the events of July 1830 to a friend in Calcutta, and that my letter, which he showed to other people, earned me a remarkable reputation when they really happened? And now everybody here is asking me what will happen to the Punjab and Kashmir on Ranjit's death: to which I reply that for the present Ranjit has no idea of dying, for in spite of his white beard and frail body, he is only fifty-one years old; and if they press me, I describe the whole thing like one of Vertot's sieges: I say which of the chiefs in the plains will fight and which in the hills, and what each one's chances are. When all these things come to pass, Wade, whom you know quite well by now, will write me a full account of it all to Paris.

I arrived on the evening of the 16th. I thought Fraser had already started out on circuit, but he was still here. He at once told me that the Governor-General's camp was still outside the walls of Delhi and would be moved during the night to Kutb, on the ruins of the ancient city, four leagues away; whereupon I reclined in his palanquin and was carried to Kutb. I spent two days with Lord and Lady William, and was even more charmed with them than during my stay in Calcutta. There was no sort of gratifying attention or mark of friendship they did not show me. I had a very long talk with Milord about the regions from which I had just returned, and with Lady William about Paris and their

own tour. So many things had happened since I had said good-bye to them in Calcutta. For the rest, I bravely drank the healths in water of all those who raised their glass in my honour, as is their national custom; nor was this the thing they admired in me least. In the Governor-General's camp there were a number of people I knew: M. Thoby Prinsep, Secretary of State, General Wittingham, in command of the division here, and M. Metcalfe, the first person who entertained me in Delhi.

Lord William is on his way to Rajputana. Lord Clare, the new Governor of Bombay, is coming to meet him. They know each other in private life, so Lord and Lady William are each giving me a letter to this nobleman in addition to recommending me to him by word of mouth. I am expecting him any day.

I am in M. Fraser's enormous house, a sort of Gothic fort which he has built at great expense on the very spot where Timur once pitched his tent at the siege of Delhi. My host is in the Governor-General's camp, for he is accompanying him to the limits of his jurisdiction. I work alone all day, with no noise going on round me except what is made by the workmen packing my collections, with nothing to disturb me, and no tiresome social engagements. In the evening I get on my horse when it is fine, or take a palanquin when it rains, and go down to the city, where I dine like a regular member of the household with the resident, a man with a subtle and well-stocked mind and retiring habits, who talks better than most Englishmen. M. Maddock has been staying with him, and to complete our party of four there is a budding young diplomatist, sparkling with wit, who never misses his chief's dinners, which means that I spend my evenings pleasantly.

The resident at Delhi receives five thousand rupees, or thirty thousand francs a month, as an entertainment allowance. And since he usually has no more than five or six people at his table, and scrupulously insists upon consuming the thirty thousand francs, you can judge whether the dinners I have here are like those I eat on the road. However, I edify this small company by my stoic sobriety. At ten o'clock we say good-night to M. Martin (the resident), and, with Maddock and Bell (the gay and witty

assistant I mentioned), retire to the latter's apartments, where, sitting close together round a good fire, we talk till midnight. There is no inducement to go to bed, for the three of us are well able to pass the time pleasantly together. Besides, they do not willingly let me go. When the last words have been said I light an excellent Havana cigar, wrap myself in my Kashmir dressing-gown, mount my horse and, preceded by two runners with torches in their hands, gallop back to Fraser's fortress. My heart was full as I returned to my quarters to-night, for before getting on my horse I had shaken hands with M. Maddock for the last time. He started this morning for his new kingdom of Katmandu, and before leaving Delhi he wrote me a farewell letter which touches me deeply. If instead of going to Bombay and the Ghats I stubbornly pushed on to Nepal, at the other end of the Himalayas, what support I should find at Katmandu!

In one of your letters you say that, if the English are so nice to me, they must be very different in India from what they are at home. As a matter of fact there is something in that, especially in the case of those living in the northern provinces to the north of Benares.

Again, you say how Frédéric pleased you by assuring you that my English was perfect and that of a gentleman. I know the language too well by now to endorse this brotherly compliment. I have remained too essentially French among this foreign people, too much myself in both the form of my thought and its mode of expression, for my language not to betray my foreign nationality at once. Sometimes this makes me impatient, but more often I congratulate myself upon it. My English is an English all my own, which is none the worse for not being perfect. Excuse my impudence! I have given up writing to Frédéric in English, and to Zoé, too, for she has just forbidden me to do so on account of the "you", which is the only mode of address in this language. In the course of her reprimands, however, Zoé has ventured upon a few phrases in the language which she condemns. Tell her that I have no fault to find with a single word. She seems to me to know it perfectly already.

I am writing to you by snatches.

It is incredible that the London newspapers should have said, as you tell me, that Lord William Bentinck arrested the Commander-in-Chief of the army. The General-in-Chief when I arrived in India was Lord Combermere; at the present moment it is Lord Dalhousie, who, after two years in command, during the whole of which he was ill, is about to hand over his post to the Chevalier Edward Barnes, ex-governor of Ceylon. The Governors of Madras and Bombay do not legally possess such absolute power as you imagine. The Governor of Calcutta has the right to arrest either of them, or indeed any other European. During the last thirty years there have been only two or three cases of such an arrest. The one which made the greatest sensation was that of a certain M. Buckingham, proprietor of a Calcutta newspaper, whom a temporary Governor of Calcutta politely requested to leave the country because he was endangering public order by his incendiary rhetoric. This Buckingham—who is, for the rest, an able man—has been preaching a crusade in London ever since against the Company's Government, but he has no reputation whatsoever. Lord William has not arrested anybody yet, for which I blame him, and make no secret of it. The number of English officers in India, both civil and military, is six thousand; the European army comprises only twenty thousand men: that is all. It is evident, then, that we do not hold the vast population of this vast land in subjection by material force. The basis of our power lies elsewhere: in the respect our character inspires in these peoples. A European of degraded morals ought to be immediately arrested and shipped back to Europe. He does more harm to the European character and the future of English power in India than a serious revolt. In Calcutta, where there are so many Europeans, and of all classes, the most insignificant Bengali keeps on his shoes in the presence of the Governor-General. In Delhi the greatest Mogul nobleman takes them off in the presence of the least of English subalterns.

Ranjit Singh, who is an absolutely independent prince, and the greatest power in Asia after the English, always received me with

his feet bare. If any nobleman whatsoever had presented himself before me in the Punjab without leaving his shoes at the door, I should have refused to receive him, and written to Lahore immediately to demand reparation from Ranjit for this insult. But such an enormity would never have occurred to anybody.

In Calcutta the Indians see European sailors being marched off drunk daily by Indians forming the military police. They see Europeans in the dock at the criminal courts. There the prestige of our name has been lowered. Throughout the whole of the Ganges delta, which is largely cultivated by indigo planters, for the most part English or half-caste, an opulent, violent and rough class, the spell is likewise broken. Nowhere are Europeans more numerous in proportion to the native population, nowhere is the latter more timid; yet nowhere are Europeans respected so little.

The excellent M. Allard has written to me from time to time since I left the Punjab. Ranjit Singh has given a present of twelve hundred francs and a pension of a thousand francs to Mirza Ahad, my Persian secretary in Kashmir, whom I did not fail to entrust with a farewell letter to the Maharajah when I discharged him at Bilaspur. That poor devil of a Mirza writes me all this in the joy of his heart, and promises that he, his mother, his brothers and all his family will pray to Allah for my happiness every day of their lives. This touched me. The excellent Allard has received a most gracious letter from Lord William, which he sent to me to translate it for him. With the translation I sent him a lottery ticket, which I had bought specially for him in Calcutta, and which may win him a hundred and sixty thousand rupees if he is in luck. The present I have made him cost me a hundred *écus*. I regret that I am so poor, and cannot make any better acknowledgment of the immense obligations under which this worthy man has laid me!

Jaipur, Ajmer, Nasirabad, Indore, Aurangabad and Poona are the most notable points on the route which I shall follow from here to Bombay. First among the Rajputs, then through the Nizam's dominions, and then among the Mahrattas. Jaipur was not

quiet last year; but order has now been restored. I know the resident at Ajmer; besides, his diplomatic aide-de-camp is a son of Colonel Fagan, whose son-in-law is also in command of a considerable body of troops near Ajmer; and so on till I get to Bombay. All the same, these English stations in the west of India are a long way apart, so do not be alarmed if there are rather long gaps between my letters.

I seem to have forgotten last year to tell you about my visit to the Begum (the Persian for princess) Sumru at Sirdhana near Meerut. Know, then, that Colonel Arnold took me to see her one Sunday morning in December while I was with him at Meerut. I had breakfast and dinner with the old witch and even kissed her hand gallantly. At dinner I had the honour of clinking glasses with her like a regular John Bull. On returning to Meerut on the following day I received an invitation to dine with her on Christmas Day. She is an old hussy quite a hundred years old, bent double and as shrivelled as a dried raisin, a sort of walking mummy who still conducted all her own business, listening to two or three secretaries at a time, while dictating to three more. Not four years ago she had some of her wretched ministers and courtiers who had fallen into disgrace blown from the mouth of her cannon; they were simply fired off like bullets. There is a story (a true one) that at the age of sixty or eighty she had a young slave-girl of whom she was jealous buried alive, and held a nautch (ball) for her husband upon this horrible grave. Her two European husbands both died violent deaths. For the rest, she was as brave as she was cruel. Some Italian monks got hold of her and made her mortally scared of the devil. She built a fine Catholic church at Sirdhana, and has recently written to the Government requesting that, on her death, part of her domain may be permanently made over to her church to provide for its upkeep. She has written to the Pope asking for a bishop of Sirdhana; yet she is not in her dotage.

Out of her revenue of sixteen *laks* (four millions) she buries eight every year in her gardens, though she could give them to anybody she likes and on her death they will become the property of the English Government. Ranjit, too, has had a mania for

burying his money for some years past. Since then his cupidity has known no bounds.

My friends the diplomatists at Delhi wanted me to be granted some magnificent title by the Emperor, such as "the pillar of science", "the torch of posterity", "the sword of the State", "high and mighty lord", etc., etc. But the Imperial Chancellery is worse than the Office of the Privy Seal. It sends in great itemized bills, overcharging like a chemist, to those whom the Great Mogul honours with a title; so I denied myself this jest and am still living on my titles from the Punjab, which are not of very good quality, for you know that Ranjit is a soldier of fortune and a usurper. . . .

We are having a most abnormal winter here for this country. It is windy and rainy, but not cold. It is very fortunate that this spell of bad weather should have arrived while I am living in a house. Continuous rain is the very devil on the road. The tents become enormously heavy, the camels which carry them slip on the soaking ground at every step. Their thigh-bones, which, with all deference to Divine Providence, are attached to the body in the most idiotic way, become dislocated, and often cannot be put back again; the ox-carts that carry the heavy baggage get buried in the mud; all the servants, drovers, camel-drivers and soldiers look dejected and have their tails between their legs. They become deaf and dumb and half paralysed. All is not pleasure in the roving life.

Yet, in spite of all, one always gets there in the end—late, it is true, and soaked to the skin, with no shelter ready, and nothing much to eat; but after all, one gets there, and on the following day one begins all over again. And by dint of starting all over again every day, in some thirty months' time, my dear father, you will see me arriving at your fourth floor—or "third floor above the entresol", to quote the landlord.

January 10

Just a word to say good-bye, father dear. I am still kept here by my workmen and a host of small domestic details that are not easily settled. I am going to be as poverty-stricken in Bombay with my 12,000 francs as I was in the Calcutta Residency with my

original allowance of 6000 francs; for everything costs exactly twice as much there as in Bengal.

There are half a dozen French boats in the Ganges on the point of sailing. Every one of them will bring one of my packets to you.

My health is perfect. I embrace you with all my heart.

February 3

MY DEAR FATHER,

I had expected to start to-day after breakfast, when I most fortunately discovered that the barrels I had had made at great expense, and filled with turpentine to preserve the fish, were leaking badly. My caravan was already on the move. It only meant starting all over again, but I hope this time will be the last. To-morrow this subtle liquid, in no way inferior to your *Essences*, will be duly imprisoned in copper vessels. It is the very devil! My table is in such an appalling state of untidiness that it is impossible to say more at present.

I shall certainly see Lord William again at Jaipur, or between Jaipur and Alwar. Adieu; I embrace you with all my heart, and Porphyre and Frédéric too, if he is still there.

38

(C.F. LXXXV)

To M. de Mareste, Paris

Delhi, February 6, 1832

If this is not local colour, my dear de Mareste, go and look for it elsewhere. Know, too, that it is the finest to be had, and that nobody here is treated to this paper¹ except Royal and Most Serene Highnesses; but the writing only begins towards the middle of the page, or if one wants to be still more polite, even

¹ This letter was written on a wide roll of paper of the kind known as "India paper", flecked with tiny pieces of gold leaf.

lower. For the space of six or eight lines one directs a regular volley point-blank at one correspondent's vanity: to the high, the exalted, the sublime, the just, the compassionate, the charitable, the generous, the powerful, the victorious, the invincible, sage of high renown, ornament of the universe, pillar of the world, great prince, prince of princes, king of kings, master of the world and arbiter of its destinies, all hail! After which one approaches the point with highly perfumed protestations of unchanging friendship. The jasmine and the narcissus play the chief part in these rose-water metaphors, suitably perfumed with that essence. One's desire to see the king of kings is as violent as the cravings of a pregnant woman, and it is cruel agony to be able to visit him only by halves, through a letter. Then, when the writer's eloquence is like a garden seared by a scorching desert wind, in which not a single flower remains to be plucked and added to his epistolary bouquet, he at last thinks of what he has to say. However simple a matter it may be, it is always couched in ambiguous and guarded terms, flanked by innumerable reservations. One ends laconically, like Fenimore Cooper's Indians, with: "That is all" or "I have spoken"; or, if one prides oneself upon a choice style: "After that, what could remain for me to say?"

When a respectable woman has to write to her absent husband, she sends for an old priest, a familiar friend of the household, and explains to him from behind a curtain what she has to say. If the scribe is a man of decent upbringing, he writes the message in the name of some person other than the lady, for it is a piece of gross ill-breeding for a woman to write direct to her husband. For instance, when she has to tell him that she has recently had a baby, a little boy of six is frequently represented as having had the baby instead of her. In spite of this extreme delicacy on the part of the women, husbands in the East have nothing to learn from their brothers in the West, especially in the middle and lower classes. Among the Rajputs, whom I am shortly going to see in their own country, spelling mistakes are as common in the castle as in the hut. Their manners have an astonishing resemblance to the manners of feudal France in the days of chivalry. Only

read Colonel Tod's fat book. Adieu, my dear fellow. Since one never writes on the back of this paper, I am forced to make my salaam abruptly, without transition. May Mohammed be your aid, and may Allah, the all-powerful, preserve you! Relieved of my herbs, rocks and beasts, which I am about to embark upon the Jamna for the Pont d'Austerlitz, I am setting out on the march again, steering towards Bombay, in perfect health.

39

(C.F. LXXXVII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Ferozepore, to the south-west of Delhi,
between that city and Jaipur
February 19, 1832, Sunday

MY DEAR FATHER,

I am treating you like a crowned head, for they are the only people who are written to on this paper flecked with gold and silver, the finest made in Delhi; which, by way of parenthesis, is not much credit to Indian industry. But coarse as it is, the pen runs more freely on it than on ours. One has only to sit down at the writing-table and, provided one has a pen in one's hand, by the end of half an hour the long page is covered with black on both sides without one's thinking about it.

Ferozepore, which is pronounced Férauze-poor, sounds quite as harmoniously to the ear as your favourite Bilaspur. I find it even prettier, by reason of its Persian derivation. *Feroze*, in Persian, means sublime, or excellent. It is the name of the pretty stone which we call the turquoise. Nor is that all: two leagues from Ferozepore, as I was marching along on foot this morning from Nagina in delicious weather, like our balmy mornings in April, I saw a charming young man advancing at the head of a troop of fine, personable horsemen, and recognized him to be the Nawab. He dismounted and advanced towards me. We em-

braced each other first over one shoulder and then over the other, as they do on the stage, and after exchanging a few more formalities we both remounted our horses and he escorted me to the elegant villa from which I am now writing to you. The cannon in the neighbouring fort was fired off as I dismounted at the garden gate. Breakfast was served when we entered the saloon, and served in the European fashion, with every possible refinement and elegance. Since it is Ramadan, my host, who is a Moslem, could not with propriety set me an example at table, but he did the honours with perfect grace. He did not press me to drink tea, or taste the good things with which the table was covered, but allowed me to drink the bowl of milk which forms my ordinary diet and eat nothing but a few oranges. But his politeness turned my abstemiousness to excellent purpose. He told me that God's most brilliant creations lived upon nothing but honey from the flowers, and that he was not surprised to see an *Aflatun*, an *Aristun* [*aristourne*] of my calibre imitating their delicate frugality.

After breakfast I dismissed Shams ud din [Schemseddine], for such is the young man's name. At noon, I went to return his call at the fort, where his little palace stands, and where I imagine he is at present breakfasting in secret on account of Ramadan. We are going for a two hours' ride on an elephant to see the country round his capital, after which I shall come back and work for the rest of the day.

This young man is the eldest son of a great Mogul family, the head of which thirty years ago was judicious enough to join Lord Lake's army against the Mahrattas. The English Government acknowledged his services by confirming him in possession of the principality which he had built up during the time of troubles. He is like the German dukes; in case of war, he has to furnish the English Government with a contingent of cavalry if called upon to do so, the contingent being in proportion to his revenues. The Grand-Duke of Ferozepore is richer than many a member of the Germanic Diet. He has four *lakhs*, or a million a year.

My well-known intimacy with M. William Fraser was enough to make me sure of the polite reception with which I met from the

young Nawab.¹ But the resident M. Martin, who is to all these nawabs and rajahs what M. Mettermich is to the German dukes, had himself written well in advance to announce my arrival. And it will be the same all the way to Bombay.

I felt parting with Fraser very deeply. In order to spare ourselves the pain of saying good-bye, it was tacitly agreed between us that I was to start, and he would let me steal away like a thief without by your leave or with your leave. But when my servant came and told me that the camels had already gone and my horse was ready, I forgot the stoical resolutions of the evening before. Fraser's heart was as full as mine, and we parted after shaking hands in silence. That was last Tuesday, the 14th. I went on and camped at Kutb, on the ruins of ancient Delhi. I could not shake off the sad impression left on me by my departure. During the night one of Fraser's men came galloping up with a letter from his master, telling me that he was suffering in the same way and had made up his mind to leave his work and hurry after me, so that we might spend a few more days together. I had been wishing for this, rather than hoping for it, for I knew that Fraser ought to have left Delhi five weeks before to preside over the assizes in his circuit, and that he was neglecting his professional duties and exposing himself to the censure of the Government so as to keep me company. So on the following day I went on and camped at Gurgaon in great dejection. . . .

. . . On my arrival at Gurgaon, I received a visit from the *nazir* or Hindu judge. By an exception which is unique in the north of India he spoke English, and quite as well as I did. He, too, told me his story, in which nobody was killed, but its conclusion was damnable. My man was a Brahmin of high caste, but very poor. His precocious intelligence, handsome face and family misfortunes attracted the interest of an old English officer of the highest rank, who took him to Calcutta and had him given a European education. His teachers, who were English missionaries, tried to turn him into a Christian, but he found the Bible in no way superior to

¹ Only three years later, on March 22, 1835, William Fraser was assassinated at the instigation of this same nawab, who was tried and executed together with the murderer.

his *shasters*, and maintained that, though not of great merit, his *Vedas* were better than the Bible; while even these *Vedas* were not good enough for him. By this process he had become what I have heard called at Philadelphia an "abominable deist".—This Brahmin was a man of sense; I kept him with me till evening, so as to make him explain his judicial duties to me in detail.

I was walking alone rather dejectedly in the half-dark on the great deserted plain where I had camped, when I saw a tall white figure approaching in the distance. It was Fraser. I had my dinner. He shared my bowl of milk and griddle-cakes, on which we dined like kings in my little sleeping-tent, the same which I took to Tibet and Kashmir, in which I had so often awakened among the strangest and most beautiful scenery of the Himalayas, and which I love like an old travelling companion, reminding me of things which I shall see no more. Impossible to finish this simple story. The Nawab's elephants are coming to fetch me, and punctuality is the politeness of—everybody. I am starting so as not to keep him waiting.

Sunday evening

The Nawab's favourite pastime consists in making his elephants fight one another. The result is that they are devilish ill-tempered, so in order to avoid any trouble with them this morning I returned his call in a barouche, for Shamsud din had sent me one. I returned later than I had expected, and then only to mount my horse again and go and see the neighbouring mines—though they were not so near as all that! But I did not regret the distance, for the country in between was most pleasantly occupied by a forest of date-palms in the depths of a wild gorge, between bare, dark mountains. The mine, as I had thought probable, was only what one would have expected from the character of the surrounding country. On the way back I saw four poor little quails sporting innocently in the rays of the setting sun. I approached noiselessly, as treacherously as a snake, and killed all four of them with a single shot: a notable addition to my to-morrow's dinner. Would you believe that my host regaled me with ices at dessert? At his request I have

just given him a certificate of hospitality in due form to show M. Martin. He deserves it.

But to return to Fraser: from Gurgaon we proceeded together on foot to Sohna [Sonah] on the 16th, and on the 17th to Nuh [Nhoun], on the line separating his district from English territory. He is as simple in his tastes as I am, and we should be excellent travelling companions, and we again regretted that we had not seen Kashmir together. Yesterday morning he slipped away from Nuh before it was light, and though I am very early myself, by the time I left my tent I found no trace of his on the spot where we had dined and spent the evening together the night before. One day he is coming to Paris. What good fellows and pleasant people there are among these Englishmen in the north of India! In Bengal, I do not know why, it is not quite the same thing. There is less cordiality and less wit. The difference is proverbial in India and is none the less true for that. Good-night, my dear father, it is growing late, and if I were to say that I am not rather tired, I should be lying. And so I am going to bed. Good-night.

Ujjain [Oodjin] in Malwa
April 5, 1832

MY DEAR FATHER,

I resume my long story begun at Ferozepore. Well, Fraser accompanied me as far as the English frontier, at Nuh. I was reckoning without my host in expecting any courtesies from the Rajah of Alwar; he was rude, and pointedly so. I returned the compliment, as I was able, and indeed bound to do. I met him while he was himself on the way to meet the Governor-General on the way back from Ajmer, where he had held a most useless sort of congress of the Rajput princes. I received a most friendly invitation from Lord William's camp to join him there, and the means of doing so without loss of time, in the shape of relays of saddle-horses and horsemen waiting along the road to serve as my guides. So leaving my caravan to make its way to Jaipur at the pace of an ox, I galloped off to the left and, leaving Rajgarh [Radjgurh], joined the Governor-General's camp at Kalakoh. This

was Saturday morning. Lord William always calls a halt on Sunday, for they say God rested on that day. So I stayed with him for two days, receiving more courtesies than ever before. I have written all about it to M. Victor de Tracy, but out of inadvertence I wrote in English, and my writing is so bad that I doubt whether you will be able to decipher it. Finding that water was suiting me so well since my departure from Delhi, I resisted the champagne and Sauterne that were busily going the round of the Governor-General's table. Meanwhile an excellent band played *La Parisienne* for my benefit—in the middle of a desert in Rajputana. What do you think of that? To show me a specimen of a Rajput court, Lord William took me with him when he received a visit from the Rajah of Alwar, and on the following day Lady William lent me her elephant to accompany Lord William when he returned the compliment. But the poor devil of a Rajah went off greatly disappointed, for he received no *khilat*.—A number of complaints had been made against him, so, to punish him for his incivility, he was refused this distinction, which is granted to the other Rajput princes. Lord William spent the best part of Sunday talking politics with me—Indian politics, naturally. He also asked me a number of questions about the Punjab. We parted good friends. Lady William took up all the time that her husband left me, and when I took leave of her she gave me a letter of introduction to the new governor of Bombay, Lord Clare, who is an intimate friend of hers. By galloping for a few hours I caught up my caravan, which was all smothered in sand, but I had not been in the least anxious about it, for from Delhi onwards it has been guarded by a sergeant and fourteen men. I arrived at Jaipur on March 1, and stayed for three days to see the city and surrounding country. It is beyond all comparison the most beautiful city in India. From thence to Ajmer, which is the prettiest place I have seen, that is, in the plains; for I liked Nahan and Mandinagar in the Himalayas even more. From Ajmer I made an excursion to Beawar [Beawr], the capital of Merwara [Mhairwarra], a mountainous region inhabited by one of the indigenous races of India. For centuries past it had no industry save that of brigandage,

carried on in the adjacent plains of Marwar and Mewar [Meiwar], but during the last ten years it has been miraculously converted to order and liberty, though the latter is only for the men. The husband buys his wife, the father sells his daughter, the son sells his mother. Dishonour for a woman consists in not being sold, or in selling badly. I will show you a few of these tender fathers, husbands full of delicacy and respectful sons in my portfolio of sketches. Ask M. Victor de Tracy to read or translate my story of Merwara to you. It cost me eighty miles, or thirty-four leagues in thirty-six hours, riding either a horse or an elephant. I was fagged out by the time I got back to Ajmer.

Between Delhi and Rajgarh I had had the good fortune to put my finger on some very interesting geological phenomena. I had the same good fortune at another Rajgarh, in the mountains between the town of Ajmer and the plain of Nasirabad, where I stopped for a day only to change my oxen, camels and escort. These Rajgarhs must infuriate you by their constant recurrence on the map; *ghur*, which is pronounced *gueur*, as in *liqueur*, means fortress, castle. Now the lord of every village has a strong tendency to assume the title of rajah. Hence every village has its *rajghur*, and has frequently no other name, unless, perhaps, it is a *radjpour*, or *radjpoura*, or *radjkote*, or *radjkoti*; *poor*, *poora*, *kota*, *koti* and *nagueur*, which I was forgetting, having almost the same meaning as *ghur*.

I camped below the fort of Chitor [Tchittour], famous in Indian history. I should like to have gone over it, not for the sake of its antiquities, for which I care very little, but on account of the rocks forming the mountain which it defends. But this was "sour grapes", for not having brought an express order for my admittance from the court at Udaipur [Oudipoor], I was unable to get in.

I wrote to Porphyre from Kherchrod [Katchrode], which you will find near here on the map, but I went a very long way round to get there. I went to Ratlam [Ruttlam], attracted by the desire to see in their natural position some curious rocks which I had seen used at Jaora [Jowra]. I had merely to let myself be carried

there in the palanquin belonging to Captain Borthwick, political agent of the English Government in the allied or tributary provinces of Malwa. You will have to add this name to your already long list of Indian saints, for M. Borthwick overwhelmed me with kindness. I saw the quarries about which I had justly been so curious, and on my return to Kherchrod yesterday morning started out again for Ujjain with the minister of the young Nawab of Jaora, whom M. Borthwick requested to accompany me as far as here, and who will act as my *cicerone*. He is one of the most intelligent Indians I have met, and a Moslem, moreover, like almost all men in this country about whom there is anything good to be said.

Wade has just succeeded with great difficulty in obtaining Ranjit's consent to opening the navigation of the Indus to the English. Fear of the Russians is at the back of this negotiation. Towards Hazaribagh and Ramgarh, on the road from Calcutta to Benares, a few regiments are engaged in making a terrible example of the Khols [Côles] who had revolted. Adieu.

Mandleshwar [Mundleysir], on the
banks of the Narbada, April 25

MY DEAR FATHER,

I passed through Indore without finding any letters from Europe, and through Mhow too. From thence I went to Mandu [Mhandhou], some vast and little known ruins on the edge of the plateau flanked by the Vindhya Mountains. The heat had become excessive. I enriched my herbaria there considerably. The table on the corner of which I am writing to you is covered with rocks that I also brought back from there. From thence I descended to Maheshwar [Mheysoeur], on the banks of this river, and three days ago I arrived at Mandleshwar. It is the residence of an English political agent, Captain Sandys, who had been so very kind as to send out horsemen and guides into the mountains of Mandu to meet me and show me these strange and beautiful regions. I had no introduction to him but a letter from M. Martin, ex-resident of Delhi and now resident at Indore, the political agent at Mandleshwar being one of his lieutenants; besides, my name is known

to everybody in India by now. How has this happened? I do not know; for I avoid appearing in public in any way whatsoever, though others in my place would no doubt have tried to do so in order to increase their importance. I avoid any kind of publicity here and am only easy of access to individuals. There are some pushing and very ignorant persons who do not behave with the same reserve, but are always putting themselves forward. I should not be very much flattered at having anything in common with them, and so I keep very quiet. But my nomad life brings me into contact with such a large number of men, in a land where men (from our own country, I mean) are not very common, that I find I am known to the large majority of this community of Europeans. In short, M. Sandys is showering politenesses and friendly offices upon me; and although Mandleshwar is one of the hottest places in India, I am recovering in his house. My men were in greater need of rest than I was. They had suffered even more than I did from the appalling heat of the last few days' march. My ox-carts had broken down in the mountains. I left half my army and the more intelligent of my servants to watch over them and see to their repair, and pushed on here with the camels. By this time the rear-guard has rejoined my camp. There is no lack of sick men. I am dosing them to the best of my ability, and successfully, too; and for my own part I am enjoying the enormous luxury of a house. There are quantities of excellent advantages in the town life of Europe which we enjoy without really knowing it. But whatever my future may be, I believe I shall always find reason to bless my mode of life when I am living in Europe.

There are numbers of things the value of which we do not feel till we have been deprived of them: the luxury of eating bread every day, of sitting on a chair, writing and eating at a table, sleeping on a mattress, and drinking wine, good or bad. After my travels in Asia very few things will suffice, I hope, for my physical well-being.

This is the land of the Bhils (Bheels on the English map), an indigenous people of India who are brigands by profession. Their Mahratta rulers were incapable of controlling them, and for

the last ten years the English have undertaken to administer their territory, handing over the revenues to the Mahratta prince. They have already effected an enormous and salutary change in the manners of these savages.

When, as will probably happen to-morrow, I cross the Narbada, which flows by about a hundred feet from here, I shall enter the Bombay territories and, at Ajanta [Adjuntah], those of the Nizam. The geological structure of this region is quite peculiar and it has a configuration all its own. It is entirely different from all the parts of India I had seen before. The Narbada has a beauty of an original type which I have found in no other river. It is most strange!

This morning I received a packet from Chandernagore, the arrival of which filled me with joy, for it was so fat that I had hopes of finding some letters from Europe in it. There was only one, from the Jardin, announcing the supplementary grant allowed me by the Minister of Commerce and Public Works, of three thousand francs for the financial year of 1831 and three thousand for the current year—in all, and once for all, six thousand francs, which I am requesting my banker to place to my credit. The gentlemen at the Jardin write that they have not yet ascertained on whose initiative M. d'Argout has granted me this compensation. I imagine it must be on the strength of the request for funds which I sent from Karnal to the Minister in February 1831. They acknowledge receipt of two of my letters, the last dated from Lahore in March 1831. So I hope that when they wrote to me (November 21, 1831) you too had received your share of my first packet from the Punjab. The last letter I had from you was dated June 1831: that is quite old by now! Adieu, my dear father, friendly messages to all around you.

Be careful of cold, heat and damp! Adieu, my dear father. Take care of yourself for your own sake and for mine. Think what a pleasure it will be to us to talk about this blazing furnace of a Mandleshwar over your glowing brands, and about many other things, too, of which I shall be full when we meet again.

I love you and embrace you with all my heart.

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(C.F. LXXXIX)

[Original in English]

To M. Victor de Tracy, Paris

Camp in Malwa, between Chitor and
Indore, March 29, 1832

MY DEAR FRIEND,

About the middle of february I have left the beautiful Delhi, to see it never more. And since that time I march in southerly direction. I border already on the tropic, the sun at midday appears to be almost vertical. Not a cloud in the sky; and the breeze which rises gently on the morning when it is not yet wanted, becomes a gale of hot wind about nine o'clock. Yet this is only the beginning of the mousoon [monsoon]. It will be fairly set in, and rage in all its fury when I shall have to cross the valleys of the Nerbuddah and of the Taptee. I should not think so much of it since I am doomed to it for the remainder of my travels in India; and I hope I shall get by and by accustomed to it. But it is a hard trial for one lately from the Himalaya.

I wish I were again on my way to Cashmeer, flying from the sun every day, instead of facing it as I do. How gladly would I take again the chances of that adventurous journey! but alas! the drama of human life is performed once only, and my imagination which pictures to me such beautiful scenes of the Himalaya makes me feel bitterly that I am dead already to the reality of their actual enjoyment. You remember Dante's lines:

. . . Nessun maggior dolore
che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria. . .

Well, there is no great difference between hell itself and a tent exposed to this indian sun, as far at least as temperature goes;

and this is true misery, and is felt the more so, when one thinks of the cool shades of Cashmeer, of its streams, of its forests.

You know already how I was detained at Delhi so much beyond my anticipations. And now, suffering as I do from the excessive heat, I cannot yet say that I regret to have made so long a stay in the imperial city. Then I lived with a friend; and the sweet remembrances of friendship are banded with those of the place where that friendship originated. Delhi shall ever be one of my dearest recollections of the East. . . .

. . . I have seen since the superb Jaipur and the delightful Ajmer. And during my very short stay in the latter, I have contrived to visit Mhairwarra, the former Abruzzi of Rajputana. It was well worth eighty miles riding in little more than 24 hours, I saw a country, whose inhabitants since an immemorial time had never had any other means of existence but plunder in the adjacent plain of Marhwar and Meywar, a people of murderers, now changed in a quiet, industrious, happy people of shepherds and cultivators. No rajpoot chiefs, no moghul emperors had ever been able to subdue them; fourteen years ago every thing was to be done with them, and since six or seven years every thing is done already. A single man has worked that wonderful miracle of civilization: major Henry Hall, the son-in-law of colonel Fagan of whom I have written to you at Delhi. As I know it will be gratifying to your feelings and to your opinion on the subject, I shall add, my dear friend, that Major Hall has accomplished this admirable social experiment without taking a single life.

The very worst characters of Mhairwarreh, he secured, confined them, or put them in irons at work on the roads. Those who had lived long by the sword without becoming notorious for wanton cruelty, he made them soldiers; they became in that capacity the keepers of their former associates and often of their former chiefs; and the rest of the population was gained to the plough. Female infanticide was a prevalent practice with the Mhairs [Mers], and generally throughout Rajputana, and now female casualties amongst infants exceeded not male casualties: a proof that the bloody practice has been abandoned; and scarcely has a man been

punished for it. Major Hall did not punish the offenders, he removed the cause of the crime, and made the crime useless, even injurious to the offender; and it is never more committed.

M. Hall has shown to me on the field the corps which he has raised from amongst those former savages. And I have seen none in the Indian army in a higher state of discipline. He was justly proud of his good work, and spared no trouble to himself that I might see it thoroughly in the few hours I had to spend with him. Upwards of a hundred of villagers were summoned from the neighbouring villages and hamlets; I conversed with them, of their former mode of life, and of their present avocations. Most of these men had shed blood. They told me they knew not then any other mode of life. It was a most miserable one by their account. They were naked and starving. Now, poor is the soil of their small valleys and their barren hills, but every hand being set at work there is plenty of clothes, of food; and so sensible they are of the immense benefit conferred upon them by the british government, that, willingly they pay to it already a tribute of 500,000 francs; which they increase every year as their national wealth admits of it.

Often I had thought that gentle means would prove inadequate to the task of breaking in populations addicted for ages to a most unruly, savage life, such as the Greeks for instance. Yet, the Klephtes were but lambs compared to the Mhairs, and in a few years these have become an industrious, laborious, well behaved people. I see by the Bombay papers that M. Capo d'Istria has been murdered. I wish Major Hall were his successor, for, now, I have the greatest confidence in the efficiency of *gentle means*. But a peculiar talent too, which is a gift of nature is required in the ruler, without which the most benevolent intentions would prove useless. We know by a Persian express the fall of Vasaw and the rejection of the reform bill by the Lords, with the outrages which have taken place immediately after it. Unsatisfactory as may be the state of our country, England is much worse. Things might be settled in France without collision, whilst in England it appears to me that it cannot be done without hurting many private

interests. Inequality in every thing there has grown to a monstrous degree. It must be somewhat lessened; will the gentle measures of laws of inheritance, etc., etc., etc., be quietly waited for? The working classes in the large towns of England are horribly degraded by usual drunkenness. I believe that in the course of our first revolution, atrocious as it were, there was scarcely a scene more shameful for the human species than the late riot at Bristol. Thanks to that revolution of ours, there is now in France such a gradual transition between the higher and the lower classes, and such an absence of lines of social demarcations, that we have nothing to fear of the calamities which England is threatened with. In England there are two classes perfectly distinct. The gentry (which includes the nobility) and the people. The natives of India have long since smartly enough made the distinction. They have two expressions only to mention a European. A *saheb logue* [*sahib log*], a lord, a gentleman; or rather, one of the lords or gentlemen; and a *gora logue* [*log*], or one of the cast of the whites; a white man. The former character is much respected by them; the latter may be dreaded, as it is indeed very often quite dreadful, but respected never.

There are disturbances in a district of central India, which I have visited two years ago, just after leaving Calcutta. They are of a more serious nature than it was first anticipated: yet I believe the insurrection completely put down already. It was not political at all; but called for, it appears, by the mismanagement of the local authorities. The more I know of this fabric, the more extraordinary it appears to me. No guess can be made at its durability, it may last centuries, and may be swept away in a few months. However, this I will foretell: the British power in India will not perish by foreign aggression. Foreign aggression indeed may do much towards its destruction, but more by the spirit of rebellion it will raise everywhere throughout the provinces of the empire, than by the actual collision of the invaders with the British armies. *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, has been of late a maxim too little acted upon. For the sake of economy, several corps, which, it is true, were of very little use, have been disbanded. And India is the country of

the world where men are the less prone to change their professions. There are few major Hall, to work the miracles he has done. Disbanded soldiers turn out robbers. There are many well organized gangs of highway men in these independent states, and without a strong escort I should be plundered to a certainty. Lord William will leave to his successor a more satisfactory budget, but I apprehend he will leave to him also ample occasion for many new expenses. I hear from Lahore sometimes by M. Allard. Some uneasiness is felt there regarding a claim from the english government supported by its diplomatic agents to have the navigation of the Indus freely open. Ranjit Singh is very reluctant to it. But he is too wise not to submit, tho' reluctantly. His son Sher Singh is now viceroy of Kashmir. 'Tis a great pity he did not fill that situation a year ago when I was there: for he is a great friend with the french officers in his father's service, and very friendly to the Europeans: besides, for a Sykh, let it be well understood, a high feeling, noble young man. The low villain who pressed so hard upon the poor helpless Cashmeerians during my stay in Kashmir is likely now brought to his accounts, and severely retaliated upon. Ranjit Singh's treasury, and Sher Singh's favour with his father, will benefit by it, but not the poor Cashmeerians, certainly.

But what do you care about Ranjit, and Sher Singh, and Kashmir? I will speak of myself to atone for so much *lunary* matter. My health has been lately a little tried by the immense changes of temperature I was subjected to. In the sandy deserts of Rajputana such is the dryness of the air, the transparency of the sky, that in the starry calm nights of the winter, the thermometer reaches the freezing point, owing to the principle of radiation. I marched two or three hours in that cold atmosphere, every morning: and the sun early was so powerful as to raise the temperature of my tent, where I spend the afternoon, to 35° (95° F.) and 36° (97° F.). By and by it will be 43° (110° F.) and 44° (111° F.) if not more, but then the nights will be almost equally hot. I caught a very bad cold, for which I was obliged to put three days at Nimach, the last english station which I have passed through;

and where I was most kindly taken care of by a good old gentleman whom I had seen at Simlah and Delhi, now the superintending surgeon of the army in these quarters. I made there a new acquaintance with a swiss family; the gentleman having got a commission in the Company's service, some twenty years ago, is now in command of a regiment, with the reputation of an excellent officer. Ten years ago he went on leave to Europe and married in his country, at Berne: just at the time when I travelled in Switzerland—they knew some of my acquaintances in their country, and most of the places which I had visited. We spoke of them, helping each other's memory, and forgot entirely the Jura which makes France and Switzerland two distinct countries. We felt like countrymen. The simplicity of their manners was a thing which I had not witnessed since I have left France; I was quite delighted with them. We spoke of the English as of foreigners to us, although we were adopted members of their society. Both husband and wife proved very accomplished persons. I have spent some happy hours with them, and not parted with them without a sincere promise to enquire after them whenever I may visit their country again, as they intend to retire there in a short time.

Adieu, my dear friend; through the bamboo screen of the door of my tent I see the sun setting behind a grove of date trees. No such things in your Paray; but your temperate countries have their poetry also. Variety makes up abundantly magnificence. It is time for my hot spiced pillau, after which I write a couple of hours more, before sending my caravan ahead by the cool of the night. This would-be english of mine is quite french: ten times more so than when I write to an Englishman. Why the difference? I assure you without vanity that I speak and write it quite differently with the English, much more like them. Perhaps because with them I think more like them, hand for english expressions [*sic*]. Whatever may be the uncorrectness of my speech in their tongue, I have seldom to be ashamed of it with English in this country, as Lady W. Bentinck is the only person who ever offered to speak french with me. Adieu again; the blank beneath, I shall fill it up at Indore, whence I shall forward this to Calcutta.

[He continues in French.]

I must give up the idea of finishing in English, because it would be impossible for me to tell you in that language that I love you and embrace you with all my heart.

Ujjain, the 5th April

[In French.]

A few words more, my dear friend, so as to blacken the page up to the end: not that I have any lack of work; but I cannot work, exposed as I am here to numberless visits. This city is the largest and most celebrated in the territories of Sindhia [Scindia], now under an English protectorate. My arrival was announced in advance in such terms that I found a charming little palace here ready to receive me, and the constituted and other authorities are coming to make their salaams. I respond in my most gracious Hindustani. The latest gazettes from Calcutta have been sent on to me from Nimach, and this morning, as I rode along the road, I read the sixteen enormous columns of Lord Brougham's speech in the House of Lords last October 7. What talent he has! But what an unfortunate use he makes of it! What an unpleasant sort of talent, alienating his listeners instead of conciliating them. If I were in public life, I should study Lord Brougham in order to avoid resembling him. What is the use of this slashing irony? What use are these quotations of Greek and Latin verses? The English have a great contempt for our parliamentary debates, both as regards form and content. I return it with all my heart so far as the form of theirs is concerned. And you, too. . . . Adieu once more; I am resting here for two days. This letter will be sent off from Indore. Remember me to your family.

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(C.F. XC)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Kherchrod in Malwa, March 31, 1832

Just a few words, my dear fellow, before my bowl of milk with its accompaniment of *chapatis* [*tchepatties*] makes its entry, and, having twisted up and swallowed my breakfast, I settle down to work for the whole day. I shall probably not be in such a good temper this afternoon, for by that time there will be about thirty-eight (100° F.) or forty (104° F.) degrees of heat in my tent, and a poor devil who is being cooked cannot think of anything funny to say. Six or seven days ago the summer burst upon us like a cannon shot without a word of warning, and I was taken unawares. You may remember having read in the reviews at the time that Dr. Oudney was said to have died of cold in the deserts of Africa. Well, less than a week ago the thermometer was down to five degrees (41° F.) at sunrise on the desert and sandy plains of Rajputana; during the daytime it would rise to thirty (86° F.), and in a tent in the sun, to forty (104° F.). The baths of cold and hot air that I took at intervals of a few hours, whether I liked it or not, have given me a nasty cold on the chest. For the last few days I have lost my voice. I had meant to cover my throat and chest with leeches on arriving at Nimach, where I stopped and spent three days with a kind old man of my acquaintance, chief physician to the army in this province. But the good fellow was prejudiced against leeches, and though I had not the slightest faith in his medical skill, out of politeness I let him do as he liked with me, and contented myself with fasting and drinking infusions of expectorant herbs. I resumed my march five days ago and am almost well again. But my deep G is still curiously hollow and sepulchral. Evidently my throat is still my weak spot. For the rest, this unfortunate incident seems to me more or less recurrent, a repetition of the one which

stopped me last year at Punch, between the Punjab and Kashmir, a month later than this year, but in similar conditions of temperature. Last year I was far worse; I had sharp pains in the chest, which have not recurred this spring. It is true that at that time I had been suffering from extreme fatigue after entering the mountains at Mirpur; whereas since leaving Delhi I have travelled in comparative comfort, and have only gone on foot when I chose to do so. All the same, I have made far longer marches than on any of my former campaigns; but I have two horses, or even three, since I dismissed the *munshi* (Persian secretary) whom I had engaged at Delhi, mounting him on the *ghunti* from Kulu given me last November by the Rajah of Mandi, so in spite of the sad condition of my cavalry there is always one beast fit to carry me. One was lamed by the bungling fellow who shod him, the *ghunti* has nothing worse than a sore back caused by my *munshi's* saddle, and but for my faithful chestnut from Calcutta, I should be obliged to travel part of the way on foot. For the rest, it is worse-tempered than ever, and a fortnight ago it threw me—I cannot yet make out how—on a heap of stones, from which I picked myself up badly bruised. This was near Ajmer; it had not taken such a liberty with me for two years past. I was cheated by my friend Fateh Ullah Beg Khan [Fatteh-Oulla-Beg-Khan] at Delhi; the *turki* [*tourqui*] which he sold me for four hundred and twenty-five rupees, that is, nearly eleven hundred francs, is a very spiritless nag. As soon as the *ghunti's* back has healed and he can bear a saddle again, I shall get rid of the *turki* for whatever price he will fetch. Sarcastic tongues at Bombay may make as many bad jokes as they like about my long legs and the small proportions of my horses.

It is most fortunate for me that I met the Governor-General in Rajputana. He and Lady William Bentinck assured me that I may count upon the hospitality of the Earl of Clare, Governor of Bombay, whom they knew personally before seeing him at the sort of Indian congress recently held by Lord William at Ajmer, which was attended by the Governor of Bombay, as well as by half a dozen Rajput princes. I saw the tail end of it all. I am not an

enthusiast for the Rajputs. I imagine that Colonel Tod's fine book has made them very much the fashion in London, and even in Paris, so that you will have heard about them. If it were not for the protection of the English Government, not one of these proud petty kings but would long since have been a pensioner and prisoner of Ranjit Singh. The whole thing is humbug! I should like to see just two or three hundred of Ranjit's old bearded warriors in the midst of as many thousands of these swaggering Rajputs.

In India, my dear fellow, everybody claims to smoke Bhilsa tobacco. Experts feel a certain amount of doubt, based upon the extreme smallness of the territory of Bhilsa (which you will find somewhere in the principality of Bhopal in Central India). But now for something even better: people here vow that there has never been such a thing as a tobacco-plant in Bhilsa, and that the famous Bhilsa tobacco is nothing but that of Kherchrod, which is sent there to be sold. I am going to try some in order to see what it is like, and if I find it good, I will bring you back a little packet. I have not taken to smoking as a habit. I only do it occasionally, often not for months on end. Since leaving Delhi I am on a diet of pure water and milk (a diet of my own choice, entirely *ad libitum*), and feel well on it. I do not eat meat every day, and I feel well on that too. Thanks to this diet I suffer far less from the heat than any European. In weather like this there are none of them on the road. All movements of troops ceased about March 10. Everybody stays quietly at home behind screens of *khas khas* [couscous] grass, which are kept damp and cause a pleasant coolness as the water evaporates, and they are fanned by fans fixed to the ceiling, or by servants, who do it by hand. Their chief occupation is cursing the country, drinking brandy and water and smoking hookahs. At daybreak they take a gallop, which comes to an end at sunrise. In the evening when the sun sets they go for a drive, and that is all. What a difference from the life I lead! Yet I have gone on like this for three years, and I have a steadfast hope that I shall last to the end. It is a pleasure to think that one thing at least will remain to me on my return: myself—

nor will this have been the easiest thing to bring home; for only see how few come back! I found several people in Delhi who admitted that they little thought to see me again when they saw me starting for Lahore fifteen months ago.

A great deal of brigandage goes on in these provinces, but on this side of the Sutlej it is almost unheard of for a European to be attacked. Besides, I have a strong escort. It follows my baggage, which would undoubtedly be pillaged but for this protection, while I go on alone with a few servants, who are, however, well armed. Your guns are excellent. I killed an antelope recently with the double-barrelled one at a range of two hundred and ninety-four of my long paces, and you will see from the extreme smallness of the two holes in its skin that the bullet had lost none of its force. But hunters do not realize how far a bullet travels, and travels straight.

Did I tell you that I sent a Kashmir shawl from Delhi to Madame Cordier? I was afraid it might be stolen in the post, as sometimes happens; but at Ajmer I found a letter from her husband thanking me in his wife's name for the present, which had arrived safe and sound at Chandernagore. Only there seems to have been some deliberation at Chandernagore over what was to be done with it, for they had never seen a shawl of that variety. M. Cordier wrote that they were hesitating whether to use it as a shawl or a dress, and asked my advice. He will be surprised, for I voted for breeches, according to the fashion in Kashmir and Persia, where these shawls, known as *djamevars* (? pyjamas), are used to make the ladies' enormously full trousers.

The news of the rejection of the Reform Bill by the Lords is making commercial circles in Calcutta tremble. Even the most solid business houses were already shaken by it.

I left Delhi at the head of a pound of green tea, quite a new thing in my larder. I use it from time to time as the spirit moves me, and find it does me good in this appalling heat. I drink it cold, without much sugar and very strong. Father would exclaim with horror if he were to see the colour of it, and would go into mourning for my nerves, for though I make it only half as strong

as the English do, I use as much tea in a day as would keep him for a month. This keeps me going during the day and often prevents me from giving things up as a bad job and lying down on the ground under my table. This beverage also prevents excessive thirst, which I can otherwise quench only by vast quantities of sugar-and-water. I wear no stockings or neck-tie, but wrap my face and head in linen cloths when I go out in the sun. Apropos of tea, since I laughed at the Tibetans for throwing away the water in which they boiled it and eating nothing but the boiled leaves, I ought not to spare the Parisians, who throw away the first water poured into the teapot, which happens to be the best. Forget forty years of family prejudice and try it.

I shall bring you no tobacco from Bhilsa. It may be very good, but I have smoked hardly anything in India but the usual mixture of brown sugar, dried raisins, dried rose-leaves and tobacco, so pure tobacco, even when the smoke has been passed through a bottle of water, seems to me so strong and acrid that I cannot manage to smoke it.

I told you I had dismissed my *munshi*. I should have added the reason why. He was very mild, very submissive, and very punctilious too, but seemed so utterly wretched at being obliged to go on foot, and sometimes to trot and gallop, that the very sight of him depressed me. He was a *sayed*, or descendant of the Prophet. Before I got to Jaipur I had to dismiss another servant, a man of high caste, too, in his way, a Brahmin. I am reasonably satisfied with the rest of my men, but their wages are ruining me. In four days' time I shall be at Indore, where I have some hope of finding letters from Europe. The last ones I received are nine months old, but through the English gazettes I have obtained some scraps of news about what was going on in France in November, and the *Hugh Lindsay*, a steamboat plying between Bombay and Suez, which is expected at Bombay any time now, will bring us some that is far more recent. I do not know how things will end in England. The line of demarcation between poor and rich is far more sharp there than it was in France forty years ago. The mass of the people, who are so wretched and ill-treated,

are brutalized by the use of strong drink and deeply degraded. If there is a revolution, it will be a terrible one.

Nobody in this country except the journalists in Calcutta has much belief in the renewal of the Company's charter, and probably nobody in England has time to think about it now, amid the great questions of domestic interest which are being thrashed out.

Adieu. I have written a much longer letter than I had intended, but I had not had a talk with you for a long time. I return to my work, or rather, I am just going to start. Adieu. I embrace you.

Mandleshwar, April 4
on the banks of the Narbada

I had a rest at Ujjain, and am doing the same here, in the hottest place in India, but I have entirely recovered. I shall be lucky if I reach Bombay before the rains. I am overwhelmed with work and can do no more than send off a few letters which I started on the road and find in my portfolio. Adieu, my dear Porphyre; I embrace you from my heart.

42

(C.F. XCI)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Edalabad [Yedlabad], on the left bank
of the Purna [Pournah], in the Deccan
May 10, 1832

42°—43°—44°—, sometimes only 40°—Centigrade, of course —[108°, 110°, 111° or 104° F.]—such, dear Porphyre, is the usual temperature of the not very circumambient air in which I exist during the middle of the day, that is to say, the temperature of the atmosphere in my tent. Less than a month ago I was at the last gasp at a far lower temperature than that, at 36° (97° F.) or 37° (99° F.). However, I hoped I should get used to it, and I was right;

for here I am getting on perfectly well and comfortably at 43° (110° F.) and 44° (111° F.). What do you think of that? I should not like to see you in this heat, but had rather hear that you were starting out on another expedition to Moscow. A strong, stout fellow like you would melt here like butter; by the end of a week nothing would be left of you but skin and bone. This is where the mathematical axis, the line, triumphs, having, like me, no dimensions save that of length! This unbelievable heat is incredible in every respect. As I sit writing I reject all garments except a thick turban of white muslin to keep my head cool and a pair of breeches, for though the name of this garment is not very decent (in English, at least, it is appallingly improper), I consider the thing itself, breeches, one of the most decent inventions that has ever occurred to human wisdom: as for coat, waistcoat, shirt and flannel shirt, to the devil with them! I make a cushion of them all, upon which I sit, and by the end of an hour it is drenched through and has to be wrung out, for it has become the reservoir or cistern for all the pores of the physical being below the waist. Well, the incredible thing is that I feel as fresh in mind and as light in body (I was about to say fresh again!) as though, instead of 43° (110° F.), the temperature stood at no more than 14° or 15° [66° or 68° F.].

It is most fortunate that the equilibrium of my humours is perfect; for if I were obliged to take clysters at this hour of the day in my tent, the water, by the grace of God (I am the only person in India who would invoke Divine Grace in this connexion; everybody else would say by the curse of Heaven)—the water, I say, would be at a temperature of 43° or 44° (110° or 111° F.). Well, you know that blood heat is only from $39\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ to 40° [103° F. (*sic*) to 104° F.]; hence it would be too hot. Q.E.D.

I breakfast off milk and bananas, the fruit of all hot countries, of which you have often heard, which is like jasmine-scented pomade gone rancid and very much sweetened. I dine exactly like a Turk, off onions stewed in ghee, that is, melted butter, the substitute for butter in India. With this I drink tepid water, and during the day-time tepid or warm lemonade, for everything is tepid or warm. I have become Indian enough to like strong-tasting

butter; and from the very day I landed in Haiti, February 18, 1827, I considered bananas a perfect fruit, unlike many Europeans, who go red in the face with rage when the first one is offered them, and reply, on tasting it, that a banana is a very poor joke to play on a decent fellow.

For the last four days I have been in the territory of Bombay, the first station in these provinces being the famous fort of Asirgarh [Assirghur]. I was very well received by the commandant,¹ and what is more, I found a letter there from the Governor of Bombay, informing me that he had sent the necessary orders to all civil or military officers stationed along the route which I intend following to the capital. So I am to want for nothing.

As I write this there is a man (one of my servants) here in my tent, rummaging in my trunks to find something for which I have asked, and to my consternation he has just taken out something I had not seen for many months past, my robes of honour (*khilats*) from the Punjab and Kashmir. How the devil am I to make the customs people understand that these are my clothes, and consequently that I have the right to import them?

Here is a rough inventory of them:—

Five pairs of large Kashmir shawls; eight odd Kashmir shawls, large and small; five pieces of China or Multan silk; silk shawls with broad gold borders; seven muslin turbans (note that a turban does not look in the least like a turban. When not exercising its functions it is a piece of magnificent muslin, very narrow and from forty to sixty feet long); two scarves of black cashmere, embroidered with silk and gold; seven or eight pieces of muslin; two pieces of gold brocade, etc., etc., all of them prohibited drugs in France. It would be very hard to have to sell them in this country for a very small fraction of what they are worth, and I attach the greatest importance to taking them back to France, so as to have the pleasure of giving presents for all the rest of my life. I should like to set you up, my dear old fellow, with an ample and magnificent cashmere dressing-gown, warmly padded, and I feel sure that you would enjoy coddling yourself in the said gown.

¹ Major Charles Davies.

Since I am in a sentimental vein, may I also say that it would give me a peculiar pleasure to see you smoking the hookah given me by the good Fraser? Firstly, because I am sure you would find it a charming way of smoking, and secondly, because this elegant little mechanism, manufactured in Delhi and given me by the best friend I have made in India, will recall to me simultaneously Delhi, this friend and the Himalayas among which I met him for the first time—in fact, a host of pleasant memories.

I will return your delightful and excellent pocket pistols, on which I have laid my head in some very queer places, where at times their presence under my pillows (save the mark! I wish you could see what I dignify by that name!) has made me sleep with a greater sense of security. You will find them very much in the same state as when you gave me them, but if the wood is a little scratched, you will love them none the less for that, will you, old man? Oh, how lovely it will be to be all together again after so many years of absence and, for me, of isolation. How delicious to dine all three—or better still, all four of us together at our little round table when the lamps are lit; to eat a French soup and drink the red wine of France, and only stir from the table to go to your room or Father's, leaving others to seek pleasure outside their own homes while we stay round the fire in our own, telling one another all that has happened during our separation. I shall have eaten alone and drunk water alone for such a long time! What a pleasure to live in a house, after spending so many years in the open air or under thin canvas, which lets in the wind, rain and sun! What a pleasure to sleep on a mattress! My eyes fill with tears as I think of these joys! If I remember rightly, old man, we shed no tears when we embraced each other for the last time; and it was better so. But the first time we embrace each other again, we will let nature take its course. It can give us nothing but pleasure. And Father, how happy he will be! Especially if all three of us are there with him! What a journey I shall have made! London, Philadelphia, Haiti. I have seen more of America than Frédéric has, for he hardly left New York during the first few years he spent in America; Niagara, a Brazilian forest, the arctic winter of the

United States, the Peak of Teneriffe, Mont Blanc, all the Alpine lakes, the Mediterranean, Table Mountain at the Cape in Africa, a hurricane at Bourbon (Réunion), the Ganges at Benares! Delhi and the Great Mogul, the source of the Jamna, one of the sources of the Indus, the lamas! Chinamen, and finally Kashmir; the highest mountains in the world! A life differing so entirely for so many years, both materially and in feeling, from that to which I believed myself to have been born and to which I shall return after my long voyages. Such long practice in foreign languages, and such complete mastery of them! Good God, Porphyre! when we are gathered together once more in your little room, how extraordinary it will all seem to me! I may even have doubts of my own identity!

Now listen, old fellow: you are letting yourself grow old, and besides, you have remained too poor to marry, which is a dismal thing to do without money. I shall not be so very young, either, by the time I get home, and shall probably be as poor as can be, so the probabilities are that we shall both remain bachelors. Well, we will try to live together as best we can. When we are old we will take our walk and play our game of backgammon together, and together, too, we will go from time to time and hear some good music. It would be far better for one or the other of us to find a nice, rich wife, who should be a wife to one of us and a sister to the other. We shall see. . . . After all, why not?

Adieu, old fellow. It goes without saying that this affectionate and absurd chatter is for you and Father alone.

(R.H.L., 1896, pp. 118-120, No. XXX)

To Captain Cordier at Chandernagore

Camp between Ajanta and Aurangabad,
May 15, 1832

DEAR MONSIEUR CORDIER,

I hope that you will not have treated me scurvily when I reach Aurangabad, but that I shall find a few friendly lines there at least from Chandernagore. They would be like butter on my bread.

Only think if they happened to be accompanied by a few of those monstrous packets of letters from Paris of which you have already sent me twenty-seven since I left Calcutta. There must be not far short of half a dozen already there or arriving this very moment by the Nantes and Le Havre boats. My latest news from Paris still stops short at July 1, which makes ten months and a half since I left Mandleshwar. From the 10th of this month to the 13th, the day before yesterday, when I climbed up on to the plateau of the Deccan at Ajanta, I have been travelling through the hottest part of India—according to the English, who ought to know—and that at the hottest season. Owing to the altitude it is three or four degrees cooler here, and I feel like a little fish in water; moreover, I stood the heat of Nimar during my last twelve marches like the best brickwork. I have never been better. It used to be my habit to cost a wretched fowl or kid its life every day; but since Mandleshwar I have lived on onions and *chapatis*, or thin cakes made of flour with all the bran left in it; and not only does the change suit me wonderfully well as regards health, but from the gastronomical point of view it will never fail to please me. You know that there are onions and onions. For instance, at Marseilles you have no doubt eaten those enormous onions, full of flavour, sweet and mild—in a word, admirable—grown from

seed obtained from Egypt. Well, these Egyptian onions have also reached Bombay, which is hardly more distant from Egypt than Marseilles is; and from Bombay the race has spread, deteriorating slightly, it is true, to the surrounding provinces. Well, those are the onions which my cook prepares with an enormous quantity of execrable melted butter—ghee, as the Indians call it—and provided that one's soul is firmly clamped into one's body, and one has had a few days to get used to this stew, I assure you that one finds it very good. I can quite understand why it was that, when Moses was starving the Jews in the desert, they regretted their captivity and their good Egyptian onions. They really had excellent reason for it—not the captivity, but the onions.

I have been very strong on the Bible for the last three months. On the evening of the day I left Delhi, February 14th, I met a young English officer among the ruins where I had camped, who had once been a great freethinker, very quarrelsome and a bit of a duellist—detestable company, in fact—but had been converted as the result of a duel in which he had killed one of his friends, and was now one of the most fanatical Christians I have ever met. For my part I hold that moderation is a virtue in all things, even in Christianity; for, as the proverb says, one must have some of everything, but not too much, even of virtue. This young fellow informed me most charitably that if I did not change my ways I should go straight to hell, and in order to show me the right way—for he justly supposed me to be a Catholic, as most of us are in France—he presented me, whether I would or not, with an English Bible, a sort of cube consisting of 1800 two-column pages in the finest print. Not a word of the Holy Scriptures is missing. Everything is faithfully rendered without disguise or veil of any sort. I have read a few chapters at random in order to test it, and I quite understand now why the Pope forbids his flock to read this book. I should do as much in his place, for boys and women at least, for I have never read a more improper book. I love to watch the beautiful, modest Englishwomen turn scarlet with annoyance when asked if they have read Lord Byron's *Don Juan* or a complete text of Shakespeare. You know that *Don Juan* is a very free

and licentious poem, but never gross. Shakespeare, for his part, is sometimes coarse, but always in an amusing way; you never find cold-blooded filth in him. Well, these prudes who purse up their lips at Lord Byron's amatory tone and Shakespeare's broad jests, go to their Mass and church and read these horrors and abominations in their Holy Bible, translated into good English and simply full of gross expressions. An English girl who has read her Bible has certainly nothing to learn from Byron or Shakespeare. What disgusting hypocrisy!

If you or I were to take a manuscript of our own composition, resembling the Bible, to a Paris printer, a respectable printer with an establishment of his own, he would certainly refuse to print it. Some starveling printer might venture upon it, but there is no doubt that, unless it were published clandestinely, the authors, printers and distributors of the said work would be prosecuted by the authorities for an *outrage upon morality*, and justly so, too. Edifying reading, indeed, this tissue of obscenities!

Decidedly the Pope is right, and I believe, as one of them did, that the most robust faith in Christianity would be shaken by reading the Bible, for that book is dangerous not only to morality but to faith.

"Certainly," this Pope used to say, "the Holy Roman Church prohibits the reading of the Scriptures. How is it to be hoped that Christians should remain Christians after reading that book?"¹

These were not that witty Pope's exact words, but they give the sense. I have forgotten my Italian, having left it behind me in Paris. On the other hand, I could now regale you with quite tolerable Persian, but who the devil is there in Paris to whom I could talk Persian?

I have seen Asirgarh [Asserghur], the most celebrated fortress in Central India, now occupied by a regiment of Sepoys from Bombay. It was there that I entered the territories of this presidency. I left them soon afterwards to enter those of the Nizam

¹ Jacquemont writes this as follows in Italian: " 'Sicuro,' diceva questo Papa, 'la Santa Chiesa Romana proibisce la lettura delle Scritture. Come si potrebbe sperare che gli Christiani, dopo avere letto questo Libro, sarebbero ancora Christiani?' "

at Ajanta. The Battle of Mandasor [Mundessour], in December 1818 (or 17), gave Messieurs the Mahrattas a sound lesson in politeness. It plunged them back into an insignificance from which they would never have emerged under emperors less contemptible and cowardly than Mohammed Shah and his successors. The Bhils, so famous for their brigandage, have become the most worthy people in the world thanks to the English administration, which is good, though it might be much better still; but after all, it is good as it stands.

Two days ago the tigers ate one of my camels, but in time the same thing will happen to the tigers as to the Bhils: they will learn to behave, to go in fear of gunshots, and to be content with sheep, calves and antelope. The loss of my camel is a great inconvenience to the transport of my baggage. It is impossible to divide his burden between the other two, and impossible to replace him by another between here and Aurangabad; but in two days' time I shall be at Aurangabad. Awaiting the pleasure of saying good day to you again when I close this packet there, believe me, dear M. Cordier, yours most sincerely, etc., etc.

P.S.—Once and for all I must make my excuses for writing to you so often on this pretty paper. It is the pleasantest of all to my hand and my pen, too, which does not run so easily on any other, but it has the disadvantage of costing hardly anything, which makes it extremely low in the eyes of the English, and it is a piece of gross rudeness among them to use it—the sort of thing for which you run a man through. The idiots! . . . sometimes.

My respects to Madame Cordier. When you have any spare time, be so kind as to tell me what has happened at Bourbon. The Calcutta newspapers say nothing on the subject but a few words which I cannot make out, for I do not possess the clue.

44

(C.F. XCII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Ellora, May 22, 1832

MY DEAR FATHER,

Here I am camping this morning in such a famous spot that I do not want to pass through it without writing you at least a few lines from it. Between the Vindhya Mountains and those of Ajanta, in the valleys of the Narbada and the Tapti, I had grown perfectly used to 42° (108° F.) or 43° (110° F.) of heat. I had almost come to feel that no temperature was too high. This region is very hilly and wild. Several times my ox-carts have broken down during their night marches, but there is a Providence that presides over broken-down carts, provided that there is a corporal at hand with four men, who go into the neighbouring villages to find a workman and an axle to replace the broken one, and have the right to call upon passers-by to prize up the cart that has overturned; for Providence alone, without the corporal and his four men, is a mere bungler. Twice, too, tigers have caused a scare in my caravan and eaten a poor devil of a peasant—not one of my servants, for my men are not allowed to take risks. I do not let them straggle along the road when there is the slightest danger. At such times beasts and men march along in a small serried band. For my own part, I am always surrounded by another, quite small one, lightly armed and with no soldiers, as I go trotting and galloping to right and left, looking at everything that comes under my nose. It goes without saying that not a single tiger has appeared in my path. It is certainly written in the heavens that I am not to see any while I am in India. However, they say it is a nasty beast to meet unless one is on a good elephant; witness the poor devil of a peasant who was carried off the other day in the rear of my caravan. It is very little use firing at them. A tiger

is often hit by twenty bullets before he dies, and when they are wounded they get savage.

The famous fortress of Asirgarh was on my route; it was the point at which I entered the territory of Bombay. Burhanpur [Bourhanpoor], which you can see a few leagues from there on the banks of the Tapti, belongs to Sindhia, the Mahratta Prince of Gwalior. Finally, at Ajanta, I entered the territory of the Nizam, and at the same time the great basin of the Godavari. On the 17th I arrived at Aurangabad, the wretched ruins of a great city founded by Aurungzeb. The officer in command there was expecting me. He was a colonel in the Bengal army, who has a division of the Nizam's troops under his command. The Nawab of Hyderabad has also sixteen thousand English troops in his pay, or troops under the command of English officers. That is the efficient cause of his existence as ruler over a great State. Abandoned to his own military resources, and the incompetence and treachery of his Moslem and Hindu officers, he would lose his throne in a few years' time and his monarchy would be split up into several hundred independent lordships, constantly ravaged by Mahratta hordes.

My host, Colonel Seyer, is a very distinguished officer both in his own profession and outside it. He literally stuffed me with information, and when I left him he filled my bags with the most excellent books. They will stay there a long time, for I have no time to read. Coming as I did from Bengal, and having met so many people there, I was almost like a brother officer to M. Seyer. I was far less of a stranger to him than any English officer from the armies of Bombay or Madras would have been who had arrived at the same time, for there is not much love lost between the officers of the three Presidencies. They are jealous of one another and rarely meet, and when they do, they almost avoid one another.

I was hoping to find some letters from you at Aurangabad; but it appears that no French boat has reached India for several months past. Not many arrive even from England at this time of year, but they will soon begin now.

Lord Clare, the Governor of Bombay, to whom I wrote a few lines officially from Indore to apprise him of my arrival in his Presidency, at the same time sending him a copy of my Calcutta passports, wrote to all his government officials stationed along the route I mean to follow, through Ahmadnagar [Ahmednagghur], Sirur [Serroure] and Poona, to warn them of this great event so that they may be prepared for it; and I found at Aurangabad letters from these gentlemen offering me their houses, porters, palanquins, etc., etc. I at once wrote and thanked both them and their governor, saying, or rather writing, that I was really overcome, as well as honoured by their hospitable attentions. When I took my leave of Colonel Seyer he told me that he, too, had received the same kind instructions on my behalf from the Government of Bombay, and that Lord Clare would probably invite me to stay with him during my visit to Bombay. If I stay in that city only a short time, the Governor's courtesy may be very convenient, but if I have to prolong my stay, I shall try to rent some shack with a roof that does not leak too badly, and settle down in it like an absolute monarch, as a traveller of my profession ought to be in his own house. But I hear such bad accounts of Bombay at the time of year when I was thinking of passing through it, that, if I can employ my time to equally good purpose at Poona, I shall probably settle down in that town for three months as a householder, for the first time since my arrival in India, for my charming pavilion in Kashmir hardly deserved the grand title of house. I have good reason to suppose that Poona will have great advantages as a naturalist's headquarters. If so, it will be all for the best, for Bombay is very unhealthy during the rains, while Poona, on the contrary, has a great reputation for healthiness at that season.

By the time I have packed my packing-cases at Poona and the rains have subsided, I shall go down to Bombay and ship them before continuing my march southwards. I should like to send you then the wardrobe I acquired in Kashmir, at the same time as the beasts, plants and rocks go off to the Jardin des Plantes; for, apart from the fact that it fills two trunks, which are inconvenient

to drag about, I am sometimes afraid it may be stolen. I must confess I should feel sorry to lose it, for it would deprive me of the only opportunity I may have on my return of making nice presents full of local colour.

Aurangabad fell with its founder, as is the way in the East. There is a Mogul mausoleum, greatly admired by those who have seen only the south of India. But after Lahore, Agra and Delhi, with their superb mosques of Shah Jahan, Akbar and Jehangir, the ruins of Aurangabad are hardly worth looking at.

The most remarkable thing in the neighbourhood of that town is the magnificent caves hollowed out in the mountains between there and here, where the most famous of them are to be found. All the monographs of which they have formed the subject come to the same conclusion: that nobody knows when, by whom or why they were excavated. The Hindus claim them as their own, and as being the work of one of their numerous gods. There are no Buddhists left in India to dispute this claim, but many Christians, having no interest in the controversy, decide it in favour of the Buddhists. We in India believe that once upon a time Buddha reigned in the north over a region extending beyond the Indian Caucasus. Near Kabul there are caves and idols which are said to be rather similar to those of Ceylon and Ellora. But though for the last fifty years a number of Europeans have known Sanskrit very well and read so many volumes written in it, nobody has yet succeeded in finding out when Brahma played the same shabby trick on Buddha in the East that Jesus Christ played on Jupiter and Co. in the West some 1800 years ago.

The other day at Aurangabad I read an analysis from the hand of the learned and ingenious M. Wilson of the Tibetan translations made by my friend M. Csoma de Körös. They are unspeakably boring. There are some twenty chapters on what sort of shoes it is fitting for lamas to wear. Among other pieces of preposterous nonsense of which these books are full, priests are forbidden to take hold of a cow's tail to help them to ford a swift river. There is no lack of profound dissertations on the properties of griffons', dragons' and unicorns' flesh or the admirable virtues of the hoofs

of winged horses. To judge by what I have seen of that people and what M. Csoma's translations tell us about them, one would take them for a race of madmen or idiots.

Yesterday I visited the famous fortress of Daulatabad [Doulatabad]. Both Hindus and Moslems attribute the construction of it to some unknown divinities. For my own part, I do not know what to think.

This morning I arrived here and camped by moonlight. I passed close by the tomb of Aurungzeb, who was a very nasty fellow, but a fairly good king, for this country. He made roads and sunk wells instead of building palaces. There is the same difference between him and his father Shah Jahan as there was between Louis XI and Francis I or Louis XIV. Baber was the Henry IV of the house of Tamerlane.

As I was riding along without thinking about keeping my balance, my horse shied at two great hyaenas which slunk by quietly under its very nose, and twice nearly threw me. I had a shot at the second one with my pistol, which did not make it run any faster, but caused my frightened horse to plunge even more violently. I am too bad a horseman and not classic enough in style to be thrown often. I wobble a bit sometimes, but that is all. That reminds me of a little dispute I used often to have with Madame Micoud; for when she got into a panic about my travels, I used to reply calmly: "One doesn't get killed".

Jaubert used to be much annoyed with me in Provence, and sometimes in the mountains of Auvergne too, for in July, when it was very hot there, I used sometimes to say: "It is nice in the sun". If he were here with me, in spite of 40° (104° F.) of heat, I should have to say exactly the same; for I have come to feel that a temperature of 40° (104° F.) to 41° (106° F.) is a good thing. This involuntary remark would simply infuriate him.

That reminds me of the letters you used to write me at Grenoble and Geneva and the curiously minute precautions which your affection would then suggest to me. Since then you have become converted to my belief, or rather my unbelief. Though rather badly made—for our mechanism is so often out of order, and in

the long run ends by breaking down—thank God we are not made of glass. Let us take good care of this violin, without which our soul seems to me no more than a useless bow. Do be careful of cold and damp, while I protect myself here from their opposites. I had intended to write you half a page for the sake of the name of this place, and here are two pages already covered with my hieroglyphics.

Adieu, then, till Poona, unless I take it into my head to pay you another visit meanwhile. I cannot indulge many whims in the desert, so it is my habit to gratify any that do come into my head. Adieu once again.

45

(C.F. XCV)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Poona, June 6, 1832

MY DEAR FATHER,

Yesterday I arrived in this city, the capital of the Mahrattas, when there were any Mahrattas otherwise than in name and as a matter of form. In 1818 Lord Hastings dealt faithfully with this nation, the last of whose rulers, Peshwa [Peschwa], requited the benefits of the English Government by foul treachery, though he had entered into a voluntary alliance with it. This is now one of the strongest English military stations in the peninsula.

You see me on the eastern slope of the Ghats; and you can judge by the distance from here to the Coromandel Coast and the proximity of the sources of the Kistna and Godavari how high this region lies above sea-level. The altitude is not less than six hundred metres, which is enough to produce a noticeable difference of climate. It is much more temperate here than at Bombay. The rains, which are about to begin, are neither so violent nor so continuous here as in Bombay and on the rest of the coast. I am told that in Bombay they would keep me prisoner in my house

for whole months at a stretch. So I am probably going to pitch my tent here during the rainy season, and, better still, I am going to rent a house, which I shall use as my headquarters for the three months, taking advantage of periods of fine weather to examine the nature of the surrounding country. The position of Poona seems to me favourable for researches into natural history. So that is all for the best.

On arriving here yesterday I found a quantity of letters. . . . But the best part of the treat awaiting me here was your letter of October 1831, No. 31, written in several instalments, besides those of Porphyre and Frédéric, Zoé and Adelaide's contributions and a very long and friendly epistle from M. de Mirbel. As is my habit, I kept you for dessert and read your letter over again in bed at night, whereupon I fell into the sweetest possible sleep in the brightest possible frame of mind.

Your Nos. 29 and 30 are missing; but No. 31 is the most essential. When you wrote it you knew of my arrival at Lahore; and you quite rightly concluded from these fortunate premisses that my expedition beyond the Sutlej would end equally satisfactorily. This was excellent logic, and I shall never give you the lie. Your letter charmed me by its gaiety, which I take to be the best sign of good health. Mine from Kashmir will not have impaired your friendship for my beloved king of Lahore. You ask me what his sons are doing. He has only one of his own begetting, named Karrak Singh [Kurruk-Singh], a man of thirty (Ranjit is fifty-two), with no talent or distinction of any sort, and in my opinion no chance of succeeding to his father's undivided power. But that suspicious fellow, that Machiavellian prince, is a complaisant husband, and so surely as he absented himself from his capital for a few months, when engaged, as he used to be, in incessant expeditions to remote parts of the country, his race multiplied extraordinarily. All his wives (of whom he has a dozen) vied with one another in being brought to bed, and always bore him sons, and fine ones at that, and seldom less than two at a time. Ranjit Singh consented to believe, or pretend to believe, that he was the father of some of these children, and there is one whom he

has raised to high honours. That is the Kaur [*Cour*], or Prince Sher Singh. In spite of his repellent name (literally "Lion-Tiger"), Sher Singh is a very nice young man. He quite naturally loathes Karrak Singh, and on the very day that Ranjit dies he will make war on him. I wish him every success. He is brave to excess and tolerably humane for a Sikh, but not clever. I met him with the king at the Feast of the Dasehra and spent an hour talking to him. He knew me perfectly well as a friend of Allard's and the Plato of the Age; so he heaped me with friendly attentions. Ranjit cares no more for his legitimate elder son than he does for his dubious younger one. His political principles reduce themselves to: "After me the deluge". You probably have no idea of what family relations are in the East, especially among the upper classes. I will explain them to you one evening by your fireside. How different this world is from ours!

You asked me whether Ranjit allowed me to ride along on the humble, modest *tattu*, since a *tattu* it was, which had carried me from Calcutta to Lahore. Yes, he did until the Feast of the Dasehra. On the evening of the festival his minister Fakir Aziz ud Din came to the English envoy's camp, which I had joined, with the Maharajah's compliments and some horses which he offered us as presents. They were magnificently harnessed, but vicious brutes. By the rules of the service Wade could not accept any present from the King. He accordingly had his horse entered to the credit of the Honourable Company, to which I also handed over mine. The horse might have been worth ten *écus* and the saddle a thousand. Both will have been sold at Ludhiana or Delhi for the benefit of the said Company. I considered that this magnificence on the part of a poor devil like me would be considered a graceful act, and it was. My extreme economy where I am personally concerned enabled me to fling money at the heads of Ranjit's people on occasion. In fact, I kept up my character of *Aflatun al zaman* to the best of my ability.

You find fault with me for not having admitted you to my palace at Lahore on familiar enough terms. The French officers were pleased to provide their own breakfast in my house, and

often their dinner too, so my kitchens were filled with a congress of Indian, Georgian, Persian, Armenian, Kashmiri and Punjabi cooks, these gentlemen's servants, with Allard's to bring up the rear. Their masters would arrive as early as eight in the morning, call upon the King for a few moments, and return immediately. When they had all arrived I ordered breakfast to be served, and did the honours of my table in French, English, Italian, Hindustani or bad Persian. In the afternoon I often went to see the King, paying him very long visits. From there I went on to Allard's palace, a league or so from the royal tents. The good fellow was thirsting for France, and could not have enough of me. In the evening we went on his elephant to see the city and the sights in the neighbourhood, or else his friend M. Ventura would act as my *cicerone*; and when I stayed to dinner with them, they would not let me return home to my garden at night for fear of the Akalis, who are a nuisance, if no more, by day, but even worse at night. At break of day I would gallop home with a good escort, though even then I was sometimes insulted. The Akalis do not spare even Ranjit himself. Wise people treat them like dogs, which it is best not to address at all so long as they confine themselves to barking.

I hope my news from Kashmir was to your taste. The beginning was a ticklish business; but schoolboys who have been made to start with Tacitus and Horace find all other Latin books very easy after them, and that is what happened to me. After my rather thorny affair at Tharochi I extricated myself from a few other awkward predicaments quite easily.

You guessed rightly in assuming that M. Allard was sure to remain one of my correspondents during the rest of my stay in India; but you had not foreseen that Ranjit would swell the list too. I am just about to compose an invocation to the Persian Muses, and concoct for that king—who is a very good fellow, quite an original, if a bit cracked—a mixture *secundum artem* consisting of a flattering elixir of roses, jasmine, hyacinths, tulips, musk, ambergris, eternal life, glory, fortune, renown, etc., etc., which will be very much to his taste, concluding pathetically with "*Wah*

guru ki fateh!" ["*Waugh Gourou Ke foteh!*"] (Victory to the great Guru Govind-Singh!). The English confine their respect so exclusively to the Christian Olympus that it makes them almost rude to others. They address their own bishops as "my lord", but not ours, nor do they give this title to the saints in the calendar of Mohammed. In talking to Moslems I never said, say, "Mohammed, Ali, Omar, Hussein", but "my lord Mohammed, His Excellency Ali, His Highness Hussein", and "Holy Mecca" instead of merely "Mecca". This courtesy, which costs very little, goes straight to people's hearts. As for the Hindus, one does not know how to behave to them; the rogues have no more religion than dogs. The Sikhs, who, like them, care very little for the Eternal Father, have at least a great affection for the memory of their Guru, or priest, Govind-Singh. A shot at a dog which is barking after a cow and threatening it goes a long way with them. I shot a number of the poor beasts in the Punjab, to the satisfaction of my bearded escort. This little piece of cruelty (though I only used small shot) gained me a great reputation for humanity.

But I told you so much about my Punjab while I was still on the spot, that I will say no more about it here.

Your indiscretion will forbid me to tell you any spicy story, my dear Father, if you are going to give me away at once. This time, however, fortunately or unfortunately, no reticence is demanded by prudence. The bindings of feminine duodecimos (*in-douze*) in the Deccan in no way fall short of those of the quadrooms in Santo Domingo in the depth of their colour; and since returning from Kashmir I find jet-black a positively staid colour.

Cholera is causing appalling ravages in Mhow, Indore and the region of Mewar, through which I passed recently. It was raging violently at Ahmadnagar when I passed through during the last few days, but it attacked hardly any but Indians. They say that water-drinkers are more subject to it than others, so I shall at least tinge mine with wine. Besides, I have my medicine in readiness and always at hand, and, if administered at the beginning of the illness, it is so efficacious that I do not worry very much. . . .

The Government of India is at present sending a young officer named Burnes, in the army of Bombay, to Transoxiana. He had already been sent there last year to take soundings in the lower Indus and ascertain its possibilities for navigation. M. Burnes arrived at Lahore by boat last summer, by way of the Indus and Ravi, while I was in Kashmir, and, having an official and political character, brought the Maharajah some presents from the Badshah of London, as the King of England is called here. His English horses and carriage for Ranjit were, in my opinion, merely a pretext for his journey up the Indus to take soundings. With Ranjit's consent he has just crossed the Punjab from Ludhiana to Attock. We know him to be on the right bank of the forbidden river, for he was about to continue his march to Peshawar or Kabul, from whence he proposes to cross the Hindu-Kush and visit the basin of the Sea of Aral and the eastern shores of the Caspian. I do not know the precise object of his journey, but I do not think he has any. He has chosen as his companion the doctor attached to the corps under Kennedy's command at Sabathu, but everybody at Sabathu knows me very well, and I found a long letter here from the said Dr. Gerrard, dated from the banks of the Indus. The poor devil is already talking about the martyrdom that awaits him. And as a matter of fact, unless they travel in the guise of beggars, which is not a very convenient way of making observations, they are very likely to be plundered, and killed if they resist.

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(*Corr. inéd.* II, No. CV)

To Colonel Don José de Hezeta, Calcutta

Poona, June 18, 1832

MY DEAR HEZETA,

I arrived here on the fifth of this month and found your letter of April 14 waiting for me. I have just this minute been

brought that of May 15, which has been faithfully and economically forwarded to me by His Excellency the Governor of Chandernagore, whom I hope you will address by some lordly title in your first letter. "*Do you think it necessary to secure the good old man's obligedness by giving such a bribe to his vanity?*" He is neither His Excellency nor even Governor: he is a mere "administrator" at a salary of fifteen thousand francs a year, or four hundred rupees a month, which he rightly considers magnificent pay for his humble functions. In France fifteen thousand francs is the salary of a general of division on the active list, an archbishop, a judge of the Court of Appeal, a First President of the Royal or Supreme Court, a Counsellor of State or a prefect. Out of his fifteen thousand francs the worthy Cordier lives very decently at Chandernagore with his servant, educates his boy well at a school in Paris, and saves a little.

In my letter from Ujjain some time ago I replied to your assumption that I should very shortly be returning to Europe. I shall spend two and a half or three months in Poona during the rainy season, which is quite bearable here, but terrible in Bombay. Next I shall make a short visit to the capital, see to the shipment of all the collections I have made since leaving Delhi, and, having lightened my equipment, shall turn southwards on my way towards Cape Comorin. Up to that point it will have been a fine long journey, and one started, too, I am proud to say, at six thousand francs a year or a hundred and sixty rupees a month, at the cost of many privations which it is pleasant to me to recall. . . . How Englishmen would laugh at our mutual confessions about our incomes. "The beggars!" they would say. But in our place they would have fifteen to twenty thousand rupees' worth of debts, instead of having that much saved. Here they borrow from a Parsee usurer in order to pay the interest on their debts to the European bankers in Bombay, and when the Parsee closes his purse-strings they borrow from a usurer raised to the a^{th} power (that is, the square of one) so as to pay the interest of their debts to the European lenders in Bombay and the Parsees in Poona. Yet there are few sub-lieutenants who do not possess at least a

pair of horses and a cabriolet and drink their bottle of beer and wine daily. This system seems to me no more nor less than organized swindling. If an officer in one of our French regiments, who was known by his brother officers to have no private fortune, were to start getting too big for his boots like this, his friends would ask him where, when and from whom he had won the money he was spending, or what old woman was keeping him, etc., etc.—in fact, what was the source of his opulence; and if he admitted that he was borrowing money and spending it over and above his pay, he would be compelled to send in his papers. Debts are a thing unknown in the French army, badly paid though it is. They are considered a disgrace. A man who has nothing may be allowed to run up debts, but one who has just enough to live upon has no business to do so.

No indeed, my friend, Lord William was not cold to me last time I saw him. On the contrary, I think as he does about the incapacity and laziness of the average run of his government officials, and their enormous salaries, and I told him so. We understand one another perfectly. But I did not attempt any sort of eulogies or humbug with him. I told him the pros and cons of everything as I saw it. In short, I was charmed with him.

I have seen Lord Clare, who is far more like an Italian butler in a great house than an English lord. He is full of polite attentions towards me. I do not know what he is really like, but nobody could seem more of a fribble (*gringaler*). If you do not quite understand this word, ask your young French assistant to explain it. Milord is tolerably popular here. I have declined the inconvenient honour of being his guest, and rented a good house for a hundred rupees a month, where I mean to work hard during the rains and shall lead a very retired life.

The nation, though very numerous, seems to me very poor in men whose society is worth cultivating. Thank you for the details about your business. With time and economy you will succeed in your enterprise, and I have not forgotten your fine teeth, which promised to wait till the day when your bread should be baked, and think no more about it. According to your description your

two assistants, the Dane and the Frenchman, would evidently make far better collectors, judges and magistrates than all your whippersnappers (*foutriquets*, which is the superlative of *gringalet*, which is the comparative of a conceited, second-rate nonentity in the Company's civil service). Yet these gentlemen work for you at a tenth or a twentieth part of one salary paid to the said whippersnappers.

I am taking good care of myself and following your advice on this subject. What I dread above all things is a draught when I am lightly clad indoors and have nothing on my head; so I have adopted the line, once and for all, of passing for rather an eccentric in preference to catching incessant colds, and I go to the most ceremonious houses with a white handkerchief on my head, as though I were in bed, and wearing my flowered dressing-gown. The women, called ladies, I do not quite know why, for they are not very ladylike (*donnesche*), probably laugh at me a good deal among themselves. What do I care? I might be the handsomest fellow in the world and make myself most agreeable to them without getting an inch further; so to me they are exactly as though they did not exist.

. . . Adieu, my dear fellow. *Euge et vale*.

P.S.—It is quite true that you are rather forgetting your French. Do you not talk it with your young Frenchman? I can write bad English as fast as I can French. So never fear, but write to me in that language if it is more convenient to you, or in Italian. Why not in Spanish or Hindustani?

Adieu, adieu. Go on making indigo, good Heavens!—as long as you can! I embrace you heartily.

(*Corr. inéd.* II, No. CVI)

To Colonel Don José de Hezeta, Calcutta

Poona, June 28, 1832

Ah! What stupid creatures the people at Poona are, my dear fellow! They go out riding and driving, breakfast, dine, dress, shave and undress, or meet on committees for settling the affairs of a public library where I have never seen anybody but myself. They sleep, sleep a great deal and snore hard, digest as best they can, sin, no doubt, as much as they can and read their newspapers from Bombay; and that is their whole life! The stupid creatures! The idiots! The judge is a perfect idiot; the magistrate a rabid hunter, etc., etc. The only sensible man is the general, who learnt his profession in your country fighting against us, and, what is more, is a good fellow. The others may be good people too, but what stupid creatures! What nonentities!

I have tried to make some of them talk about the land in which they live. They know no more about it than I do, who have only just arrived, and they do not speak any of its dialects. They have not travelled about it, and have no desire to do so, or to know anything about it. Oh! the brutish, brutish creatures!

Without any preliminary exhibition of false modesty, I will tell you point-blank: a long-legged wanderer arrives among them, speaking their language, who has seen a great deal in this land of India. That wanderer is myself. Well, not one of these idiots has yet taken it into his head to ask me a question about one of the many things (and there are so many of them, too) of which they are ignorant and which I learnt during my wanderings. As though I were not a curiosity! As though Poona were paved with gentlemen with high-sounding Persian titles, and one had only to stoop and pick up such rare animals as an *Aflatun al zaman*,

Jalinus al Doran or *Bocrate al Haid*. You, who are a bit of an Anglomaniac, will say that it is discretion and self-restraint on their part. Not a bit of it, my dear Hezeta! It is torpor, it is stupidity, they are exactly like *Whatthen* in *La Princesse de Babylone*. If you are so fortunate as to have forgotten this romance of Voltaire's, read it again and renew your acquaintance with milord Whatthen; he is the original of my stupid idiots at Poona.

For the rest, the climate is charming. I have myself fanned with a "*hand-punkah*" as I write, simply on account of the flies. The days are temperate, the nights cool. I find it most comfortable, as they say, to live in a house, to be the *sahib khana*, to eat beef and bread and drink bad claret, etc., etc. I am recovering from the fatigues of the road; for it is a very long way, my dear fellow, from Calcutta to Bombay, especially by way of Tibet and Kashmir.

In such company as this I am filled with an inward pride which would make you laugh if you could see it. There is a botanist, too, a doctor by profession with a taste for horticulture. How stupid botanists are in general. Now, aren't they? In Paris—with the exception of those, of course, whom I know to be able and witty—I flee from them like the plague. Nobody realizes more than I do that there are some very beautiful things to be learnt and discovered in a flower or a fly, but ninety-nine out of a hundred so-called botanists and entomologists do not care a bit for these beautiful, learned and difficult things.

The other day a German passed through here, a baron, of course; what German is not a baron, outside his own country, at least? It is like Spaniards. Outside Spain you are all *Don* . . . and we Frenchmen are for the most part counts or chevaliers. Really, I am the only Frenchman ever heard of in this country who has been plain *Monsieur*. I almost blush for it. Well, this German, or German baron, has a very great reputation in Poona as a botanist and a profound naturalist in every branch of the subject. He is stuffing a few birds. As I sat next him at dinner I plied him with questions about the formation of the *sternum* (the breast-bone, which is most complicated in birds, varies greatly and is very important), the *caecum*, or intestinal appendage, which is very

important in the anatomy of creatures of this class, and the artery of the trachea. All this was Greek to my German, though I expressed myself in French, which he speaks almost as well as I do myself.

For Heaven's sake invent me some theory or explanation to help me understand why there is something decidedly more distinguished, better bred and more pleasing in the manners of the English to the north of Benares than there is to the south of that city. It is a generally recognized fact and in my opinion cannot be gainsaid. In the northern provinces I have left an intimate friend and a number of very good friends besides, with whom I was on quite familiar, if not intimate terms. It is absolutely different here. It is as dull and stupid as a little provincial town. My friends in the north are for the most part at Simla, being ill, or pretending to be, frequenting the hills and their feminine inhabitants. They write to me with an ease and freedom, a gay licence, a tone of good-fellowship, which perhaps overstep what a French pen would venture upon. That is what I like! Here there is nothing of the sort, everything is dull, vulgar—I was almost saying low, which would have been unfair.

The last man I saw from Bengal was an officer in your army, who is in command of a division of the Nizam's regular army. I spent only three days with him, and we became as thick as thieves. In him again I found the frank manners and simplicity, the "*inobtrusive*" hospitality of the men of the north, which I like so much. Of course I have my own little theory on these moral and social reactions, and when you have expounded yours I will submit mine, which I believe to be the true one. But why not to-day? you will say. Well then, since *noblesse oblige!*—here is my explanation: In the north of Hindustan, thanks to their political position, Europeans are great lords. They have immense power, subject to little or no control. Hence the easy manners which, it is admitted, almost all princes possess in Europe. They consider themselves what they really are there, great lords, and develop a prejudice in favour of taking every European for a lord; so that when a man passes through their territories they treat him as lords

should treat one another, and not like Mr. So-and-so.

If you are fortunate in your speculations, put aside ten thousand rupees every year. You are very lucky, so in four years' time you will have forty thousand, or a hundred thousand francs, with which it would be easy for you to buy an annuity of six thousand francs in France, a sum on which you would be able to live comfortably as an old bachelor in Paris, which is what you ought to think of doing rather than returning to your native country, where you will end by being hanged.

Adieu, my dear fellow. Read what I have written if you can; and if you cannot, guess at it!

Yours affectionately.

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(C.F. XCIX)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Poona, July 7, 1832

MY DEAR FATHER,

At last all your letters are arriving. After your No. 31, which I received last June 6, here is your No. 32, which reached me the day before yesterday, and yesterday your No. 29, which took a year to make the voyage, by a boat called *Le Diligent*! It is annoying to have them arriving out of the order in which they left France. No. 30 is now the only one still wandering round the world.

I have also received M. de Humboldt's memoirs, which the kindly M. Cordier of Chandernagore cut up and divided into packets of the right size for the post. Your No. 29, which you closed on August 11, was in answer to my letters from Karnal in February 1831. It is so old, and I have written to you so often since then, that scarcely anything is left for me to answer. You asked me, however, whether the dysentery, which I told you was

causing ravages in Delhi while I was staying in that city, was not the cholera. Not at all: it was dysentery, as I told you. If it had been cholera, I should have said so; but I have only known that disease by sight for the last thirty-six hours. We have it here at present: one of my servants went down with it the evening before last.¹ I knew it as well as a man can do who has not observed it himself but has enquired into it thoroughly, so from the very first I was perfectly certain I had diagnosed it correctly. The symptoms are such that it cannot be confused with any other disease; besides which, there are more than enough of them. The state of the pulse alone would indicate the nature of the disease, or the state of the skin on the hands and the soles of the feet, the temperature of the body, the sluggish circulation, the look of the eyes and face, and lastly, the character and nature of the excrements.

I have treated the poor fellow to the best of my ability, and after being ill for thirty-six hours, he is still alive, which is a great deal; but I doubt if he will last the day, or even the morning. He is a Hindu, the best of my servants, and the one who has been almost the longest in my employment. The others, whether Hindus or Moslems, watch over him constantly, put a good face on things when they are in his presence, try to cheer him by stories which he can no longer understand, and then retire into the garden and roll on the ground sobbing. My *sirdar*, or intendant, who belongs to the same caste as the sick man, and is his companion, too, in the services which they both perform for me, besides being by far the most active, sensible and mature among this band of big children, has just given way to the most violent despair here in my room.

I hope you do not believe in contagion, for I am constantly going into the sick man's room and touching him, after which I come back here, take up my pen again and go on writing. This appalling disease is certainly not contagious, in India, at least. There is no difference of opinion on this point among European

¹ After Jacquemont's death a description of cholera and its symptoms was found by Dr. Ainslie among his papers, and a description from his own hand of the course of this servant's malady.

doctors, or Indian ones either; and since the many descriptions that I have read recently of cholera in Russia and England exactly resemble Indian cholera, I regard it as almost certain that the cholera at present raging in Europe is not infectious through contagion. I do not know any satisfactory analysis of the climatic conditions in which cholera seems to develop most actively. English doctors in India, or the vast majority of them at least, are far from being educated or physicians enough to make this analysis. There is cholera all over the Deccan this summer. Many of the natives are dying of it in this very place; but out of two thousand European soldiers and more than a hundred and fifty officers, not a single one has been attacked yet at Poona this season. We are always less subject to it than the Indians. But this year and in this place the difference in our favour is absolute, and that is why I have no hesitation in telling you, as though I were talking of a perfectly indifferent matter, that there is a poor fellow dying of this disease a few steps away in a neighbouring room.

I take great care of myself, drink a drop of brandy in the morning and wine with my breakfast, when, as rarely happens, I have some meat then. I drink wine with my dinner, and when I sit up late writing, I have a large cup of tea with rum in it, after which I go to bed. I keep well covered up at night, and during the day-time I always wear a long Kashmir shawl rolled round my body as a belt, not round the waist but round the hips, in such a way as to keep my stomach and abdomen in a vapour bath at an even temperature. I believe that a large number of illnesses in this country arise out of chills in this part of the body, which very often go unnoticed. . . .

Adieu. I have acres of manuscript for you, but there is no boat ready to leave Calcutta, so I am keeping it all, and will make one bale of the whole thing. I embrace you from my heart.

In the evening

My poor man, as I had expected, died this morning while I was at breakfast, which I had not the heart to finish. He had been to Kashmir with me, and was the most active and useful of my

men, and the most tractable; he had never served anybody but me. This morning he could still recognize me, and answered: "*Khudawand*" [Khroudavond] (my lord) when I called him by name. By midday he had been cremated. I have had to go and ask a neighbour to give me dinner, for all my men were at the funeral. I should regret the poor fellow more if I had not always treated him well, but he heard very few harsh words from me during these two years, and though I originally engaged him at five rupees a month, for a long time past I had given him twice as much.

49

(R.H.L., 1896, p. 250, No. XXXVIII)

To Captain Cordier, Chandernagore

Poona, July 21, 1832

DEAR MONSIEUR CORDIER,

I enclose a wiggling, and a most severe one too, for the people at Ludhiana, Simla and others in that region, who have been keeping me waiting for ages for a few little tables of the cholera-morbus, the small-pox, the readings of the rain-gauge, the customs, etc., etc., which I had asked them to send me without delay. In order to punish them for hanging fire so long, I am laying upon them in these presents a fresh burden to cope with. But they will do so, for to obtain such things as this I apply only to good fellows.

There are plenty of these to the north of Agra. You have no idea how the English character is modified, and modified for the better, in the northern provinces of Hindustan. Here I find them *au naturel*, which is not, in my opinion, a compliment to them, any more than to their green peas and potatoes when cooked in this way. A little sauce is not amiss when it is good.

English officials do not abuse their power when far from the master's eye. On the contrary, it is my conviction that, the more

confidence their Government reposes in them, and the greater the discretionary powers it leaves them, the better they serve it. They then become a sort of pashas or cadis, in the oriental fashion, only just and honest. The golden age, which was no more nor less than the age of corruption, is over.

One of these days you will allow me, will you not, to send a few columns for you to fill up with statistics of your great and beautiful city of Chandernagore. I shall not have to ask you anything except about subjects which you have at your fingers' ends: population, births, deaths, murders. That will be practically all.

Adieu for to-day. I have no time to gossip as I should like.

Yours affectionately.

50

(C.F. CIII)

To Captain Cordier, Chandernagore

Poona, July 27, 1832

DEAR MONSIEUR CORDIER,

Here I am on my legs again, or rather in my armchair, after spending five days in bed in an extremely groggy state, thanks to a sudden and violent attack of dysentery, which came upon me like a pistol-shot, and left me yesterday in the same way, as a result of a fearsome lot of "*blue pills*", calomel, rhubarb, opium, magnesia, cream of tartar, castor oil, ipecacuanha, etc., etc., and a soothing clyster of gum arabic, which seems to me to have settled the matter.

A traveller of my profession has a choice between various kinds of *fiasco*, as the Italians call it, but the most complete *fiasco* is to die on the road. A few poor devils have been less fortunate than I have, and, owing to the dysentery which prevails here, have gone to see what there is behind the great wall. Much good may it do them!

Adieu, dear Monsieur Cordier. The gazettes will have informed you that the people of Bombay are setting to work in no feeble fashion to keep the plague from their shores. They are right. The cholera is hardly killing anybody here now. It is raining less violently than in Calcutta, but more continuously. It is dismal and enough to make one die of boredom.

Adieu. I am leaving you for my convalescent's mess of arrow-root. Take care you do not fall ill!

Yours affectionately.

51

(*Corr. inéd.* II, No. CIX)

To M. de Melay, Pondicherry

Poona, August 11, 1832

DEAR MONSIEUR,

I have been thinking I was about to start on a very much more distant journey than suited my views. More distant? That is the question, as Hamlet says. The fact is, that I have had an attack of dysentery, which kept me in a very precarious state for four days. The English doctors took possession of me and stuffed me with calomel and other mild remedies, which had no effect, till it occurred to me to pilot my boat myself, and by dint of sixty leeches and some soothing, emollient, gummy clysters I have set it afloat again. This happened a fortnight ago, and for the last week there have been no further signs of it. I am livelier than I was before. I hope that dysentery will dispense me from cholera, which, after killing off the Indians in Poona like dogs, is now despatching a tolerable number of Europeans.

And now the time will soon be approaching when I was thinking of going down to Bombay; but they write that it is impossible to go outside one's house there, so I must wait another month. By that time there will be a little less rain and a little less mud, but rather more "*jungle-fever*".

On my return here I shall make for Goa by way of Satara [Sattarah] and Belgaum and there take counsel with myself to smell out as best I can the order and lie of the strata which I am likely to meet with towards the south, so that I may set my course in the right direction and tack scientifically in the direction of Mahé. The object of these presents is to ask you for a letter of introduction to the officer in command at Mahé, which I shall use as a pretext for writing and sounding him about the route by which to approach his modest capital overland, the roads, means of transport, etc., etc., and also about the weather, the least idle of subjects for a nomad. All I know about this tributary of your crown is that his name is Jourdain and that he is a naval officer.

If you have broken the ice in English and can read it without effort, I can recommend a book entitled *Auber's Analysis of the Constitution of the East India Company*. It is certainly to be had at Madras. It is a large volume, and it will be sufficient if you read a fifth or a sixth of it, for the rest consists of the original documents, mainly Acts of Parliament. In two hours a day for a week, M. Auber will teach you a great deal about our neighbours' "shop", in which he is an interested party. There is a newer book—very new, in fact—entitled *On the Land Tax in India*, by Colonel Briggs, the cleverest man in Madras, and at present resident at Mysore. I recommend it to you as an excellent work, too; it is in one volume, in very large print.

Here we are preparing for a little war upon a horde of brigands who inhabit the so-called desert between the Rann [Runn] and the Indus, having their headquarters at Parkar. I miss my friends in Bengal and Hindustan. There is no doubt that in those provinces the English character undergoes a considerable change, and for the better, too. Here they are, as it were, at home, and glory in it. Poona, which was still the capital of a large independent state fifteen years ago, is more like an English town than Calcutta. The English here have not adopted any of the Indian customs. They are not surrounded by elephants, camels, scarlet, brocade or arquebuses. In Hindustan this oriental setting is very picturesque. The time I spent in the Punjab and Kashmir has

entirely indianized me. I learnt more about oriental ways of thinking in eight months than during all the rest of my travels on this side of the Sutlej. I became almost imbued with caste prejudice there, and am often vexed at seeing men of my caste here, the caste of sahibs, or gentlemen, acting in a manner contrary to that expected of them.

A few letters have recently come through from Persia. They report that the cholera was causing great ravages in Paris, and that the populace had risen in revolt against the doctors, whom it accused of poisoning their patients, and massacred a number of them.

There is no talk of war.

Adieu, dear Monsieur de Melay; beware of "*visitations of God*", which I interpret as visits of the devil. "*To die by the visitation of God*" is the English legal formula for saying: to die a natural death. A plague on the intrusive fellow! Affectionately yours. The few lines for M. Jourdain should be sent to my care at Poona.

52

(C.F. CIV)

To Mademoiselle Zoé Noizet de Saint Paul, Arras

Poona, August 21, 1832

MY DEAR ZOÉ,

I received a tolerably fat packet from Paris this morning, and before going to bed I will write a few lines in answer to your eight pages of November 12 and January 3, 1832. I have written so much to-day that my hand is quite stiff, and besides, it is very late, and to-morrow at daybreak I have to gallop to a place six leagues from here, where I shall find my *ghuntî*, or little Tartar horse, saddled and bridled ready to climb up into the mountains, and two fully equipped botanico-mineralogical servants ready at their post, at the head of whom I shall botanize, geologize or zoologize

if occasion arises. Then, having filled my bags, I shall return here as if the devil himself were after me, on the same horse as carried me there, for by that time it will be midday, and I shall have eaten nothing yet, after some fifteen leagues on horseback or on foot through mud and rain. So I really must go to bed, for it is already very late.

You were simply furious with my father for including among the letters which he sent on to you a certain epistle of mine from Lahore which I had expressly placed on the index. I do not quite remember of what crime it was guilty; but there must have been something very lively in it to explain the exceptional measures which I ordered to be taken against it. Your remark about old men and their lack of modesty is perfectly true. They simply have none. But you do not say why. It is because they no longer have any sex. They have become souls, intelligences, as though they no longer belonged to this world.

If my father had been only fifty instead of seventy-five—and I might have a father of that age—my relations with him would be quite different and absolutely free. Each of us would have cause to blush before the other. But, as you say, one does not blush when one is alone, and with an old man of seventy-five I feel as if I were quite alone; hence the freedom of the stories with which I sometimes venture to amuse my old father.

You frankly confess that you have read *Tristram Shandy* because you are not afraid of meeting Sterne in this world. Well! Do you not feel that an old man is almost like one dead? You were quite right not to read my stories about Lahore or my peccadilloes there—not on my father's account, but on mine.

You laugh at my remark about saying "in" and not "at" Kashmir, but you are wrong. Otherwise I should not know how to refer to the province, of which the city known to us as Kashmir, and to the Kashmiris as *Shahr* [*Chaër*], or *the city, par excellence*, is the capital. . . .

I have nearly died of an attack of dysentery, the first illness I have had in India. For three days I was in a really precarious condition. My pains were agonizing, but my head was quite clear,

and remarkably fresh and active. But I had nothing to feed it upon. My doctor was an honest Scotchman, incapable, like everybody here, of playing up to me when I tried to talk to him. My mind was so active that it nearly killed me. I felt that some beautiful airs of Mozart's, played by a good violinist, might charm me and gild the pill, and since it so happens that there is a more than tolerable musician here, I was just about to send for him, so as to die to music, when my medicine worked and brought about a state of convalescence. The poor Scotch doctor was not much edified by this musical caprice, but he did not venture to offer me his Presbyterian Brahmin. I am perfectly well again, and better than ever for having been shaken up like this. The cholera has killed large numbers here; but people are used to it, and nobody thinks any more about it than one does of one's chances of capsizing at sea.

Good-night, my dear Zoé. Write to me again when you receive these lines. Good-night.

53

(C.F. CV)

To Madame Fanny de Perey, Paris

Poona, August 25, 1832

I mean to open a ribbon-shop soon, my dear Fanny. I am receiving ribbons from every quarter.¹ I thank you none the less affectionately for the half-yard you have sent me, which I have just received this morning. Your letter found me in yellow slippers, a Kashmir robe of dead-leaf brown, and a white turban—the right costume for a man with a cold, who is buried up to the neck in papers and looks like a regular Turk in an opera. I ask you, how am I to consume so many ribbons? But Porphyre is threaten-

¹ On September 3 Jacquemont received the official notification of his nomination by the King as a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

ing to present me with a bill for postage on my letters of congratulation when I return. The ribbons will be just the thing. However, I have sported a little scrap on my black coat on grand occasions. My father has sent me a cross. I do not wear it because I do not know how it is put on with a civilian's coat, any more than Porphyre knew how to tie a sword-knot on his sword twenty years ago. Ask him to tell you the story of that sword-knot. Adieu; I have no time to say more.

54

(C.F. CVII)

To Captain Cordier, Chandernagore

Poona, September 6, 1832

MY DEAR MONSIEUR CORDIER,

It was midnight or one o'clock in the morning, and I was snoring resonantly, when my idiot of a servant appeared to me, not in a dream but in the flesh, and told me with a terrified air that there was a packet of letters under my pillow which had arrived during the day, but which he had entirely forgotten to give me on my return from Dapuri (?), where I had been that morning. As was only natural, I told him to go to the devil. However, when I had recovered my composure I slipped my hand under my pillow, and to my great joy fished out your voluminous packet of August 18.

First of all you will note that I have profited by your anecdote about M. Dupuy, and have made marked reforms in my writing. God knows how long this fit of virtue will last. But the fact is, I have only one pen, which I never cut, for the reason that, having no other, if I once started cutting it, I should soon have none at all. Every three or four months I buy about fifteen rupees' worth of paper, but I have not bought a pen since I have been in India. This is a mania which I inherit from my father. He spends his

whole life writing and writes as clearly as print, but has never possessed a penknife in his life. He would write as admirably with a cabbage stump as with the best of pens.

My reigning pen at the present moment has served my purpose since January, and is as fresh as when it entered my service. I have written at least two or three thousand pages, and it has never been better. It will easily take me as far as Pondicherry, or even Paris, where it will be worthy of a place in some collection of curiosities, won't it?

The odd thing is that, careless though I am about the point of my pen, nobody is so hard to please in my choice of paper; and it is one of my troubles in India that I cannot have the same paper as I use in Paris. It is the perfection of pleasure to write on smooth Kashmir paper with Indian ink, but it is a tiresome business to prepare this ink. Few people know how to make it neither too thin nor too thick nor too sticky, and I am not one of them. Captain Troyer always uses it, for he doubtless has *munshis* to prepare it for him. English ink, which we are reduced to using, is very ugly; it only turns black as it dries. I like to see my prose stand out in brilliant black as I cover the paper with it. The small Chinese paper with a pink border is delightful, in my opinion, but only on one side. Are you not of the same opinion? I brought back with me from Kashmir a large quantity of the best paper that is made there, and I regret having given it to my friends, the diplomatists of the north. You must know that it is the most fashionable of all papers in the Asiatic chancelleries—I mean those in which Persian is used. The merchants seldom bring the best qualities into India, so everybody descended upon me, and I was very pleased to see myself plundered of such trifles by people from whom I had received so many marks of friendship. They made great fun of my plants and stones, and pretended that I ought to have brought them back some Kashmiri girls. As a matter of fact, they are a very common article of commerce in Kashmir, and so cheap that I might have allowed myself such a gallant attention to all my friends at Ludhiana, Simla, Ambala, Meerut and Delhi. But it seemed to me rather a butcher's job—so

much so, that I did not indulge in such a fancy even on my own behalf. . . .

. . . I am making preparations for my journey southwards.

Yesterday evening I wrote to M. Lushington, Governor of Madras, who is shortly leaving India and being replaced by General Frederick Adam. I had letters of introduction for M. Lushington from the powers that be in London. Lord Clare, who has been most friendly, knows M. Lushington unofficially as well, and will send him my packet, adding an introduction from his own hand.

When I leave Poona for the South, which I hope to do at the beginning of November, I shall set my course in the direction of the Nilgiris, turning aside to right and left to see any particularly interesting places. I doubt whether I shall go to Mahé. I have written to M. Jourdain on the chance, asking him for all the information he may be able to give me as a result of living at that pretty little place, in addition to what I already owe to you.

I should like to arrive at the Nilgiris towards the end of February, and hope to do so. I shall rent a house there and most likely stay there till September, towards which time I shall go down to Pondicherry, probably by way of Tanjore.

On reaching Pondicherry, I shall probably have come to the end of my journey; for I regard a short visit to Madras as a mere excursion. I shall allow myself a pleasant little stay with our kind governor at Pondicherry before submitting to four months under close arrest on board a floating prison. Is it possible to travel overland conveniently from sea to sea in September? Are not the rains very violent at that season, and the roads very bad?

Adieu, dear Monsieur Cordier; I find on finishing my letter that, though neater, my writing to-day is more legible than usual. The reason is that, without noticing it, I have adopted the narrow, sloping English characters.

Yours very sincerely.

55

(C.F. CVIII)

To M. Venceslas Jacquemont, Paris

Poona, September 14, 1832

MY DEAR FATHER,

I have a packet ready for you, but should not like it to go off without adding a few other letters which are not yet ready. So that is why I am keeping it back. This is not of much consequence, however, for I do not think there is any boat about to sail from Calcutta: this is not the right season. I have received all your letters up to last March.

I still find it impossible to make up my mind exactly when and from where I shall be able to sail for home. I am going to write to M. de Melay and ascertain the regular movements of boats to and from his little port, or rather roadstead, and that of Madras (for though there is a harbour-master at Pondicherry, there is no more a harbour there than at Montmorency or Versailles); but the usual time of year at which boats sail for Europe is in December and January. It is therefore probable (but you shall know for certain long before I sail) that I shall not be back till the spring of 1834. I should prefer this, too, for reasons of health. I dread the cold. Here, in a place reputed to be cool at this season, to which people crowd from the steam-bath of Bombay to regain a little vitality, the thermometer in my room has varied slightly, between 25° (77° F.) and 26° (79° F.), during the last two months, and I sleep under two woollen blankets.

My health is good. To-morrow I am leaving for Bombay, first taking a look at the island of Salsette on my way. My fish are driving me wild. I have to stow away a quantity of jars of spirit myself, or else they would all be broken by stupid Indian servants. If it were not for that, I should be able to tell you more, but I have no time. In honour of the principles on which we have conducted

this correspondence, I am giving a number to this note. Adieu. I embrace you with all my heart.

56

(*Corr. inéd.* II, No. CXIII)

To M. de Melay, Pondicherry

Thana, Island of Salsette
Monday, October 8, 1832

This island, so pleasantly cultivated and civilized along its coasts, is nothing but a mass of fairly high mountains in the interior, covered with thick forests. In its steepest rocks, in the heart of its profoundest solitudes, are hollowed out the subterranean temples of Kennery (?), mysterious monuments to the worship of Buddha, which disappeared from the whole north and west of India nobody knows when. Yesterday I spent the day there after a very long and trying march. Alone in a deserted temple on top of the mountains, I was admiring the superb panorama stretched out at my feet and looking through a quantity of botanical treasures quietly and enjoyably, when a German traveller named the Baron von Hügel, who has come to Bombay to see some of the wonders of this land, entered the Buddhist cell in which I had settled down. We had agreed to meet there and botanize together. M. von Hügel brought me that morning's Bombay papers, thus spoiling my happiness.

They contained the disastrous news about which you, dear M. de Melay, seem to know more than they told me. I do not know anything about this unfortunate protest by which our friends have compromised themselves afresh. But now that they have embarked upon a wrong course, every day is bound to lead them into greater blunders. It is deplorable! Shall I return to Paris, then, only to don the uniform of the National Guard and spend my time incessantly firing in the streets? . . .

I had already heard of the death of Cuvier. What a prodigious mind is now no more! He created new sciences, which bore splendid fruit. Geology would be a poor thing but for his comparative anatomy. He improved everything he touched. But he was selfish and hard, hard to the point of unkindness, and individuals meant nothing to him. He considered the human race from the abstract point of view, as geometers are prone to do. The regrets you express with regard to my absence at a moment when there is such a rich prospect of succeeding him are most kind, and I thank you with all my heart, but I have nothing to hope for in that direction. The materials I have collected are still in the rough. It will take me three or four years' work in Paris to complete my task. Till then I shall have no right to the inheritance of older men who may die. . . .

. . . Adieu; I am overwhelmed with work on all sides. But I have perfect health to cope with it. Adieu, dear Monsieur de Melay. Most affectionately yours. . . .

57

(R.H.L., 1896, pp. 265-6, No. LIII)

To Captain Cordier, Chandernagore

Thana, October 10, 1832

DEAR MONSIEUR CORDIER,

The devil take hieroglyphs of all nationalities! During the last few days I have received from kind M. Wade two enormous statistical tables showing the imports and exports entering and leaving India and the Punjab through Ludhiana. They are in Persian, but in Persian so badly written that no *munshi* in these parts can help me decipher it. I am therefore returning this scrawl to M. Wade with a request that he will regard the thanks which I had hastened to send him on receipt of the packet as cancelled, and an urgent demand for a fair copy. On the other hand, I have

induced no less a hand than that of the Persian secretary to the Government to prepare five letters of introduction in Persian for me in Bombay, for my friend M. Fraser to present to my acquaintances beyond the Sutlej. None of them are written according to my own taste, but I am afraid of exhausting the kindness of the people in Bombay (who have not got as much as their brethren in Bengal), so, instead of applying to them for the corrections which I consider suitable, I am sending their prose to Fraser, who understands such things far better than the whole lot of them, and have asked him to rewrite all the letters himself and send them back to me to be signed and sealed as soon as they are ready.

Is it not amusing for a Parisian—and very much of a Parisian, too—to find himself in correspondence with a heap of scoundrels in the heart of Asia? One of my letters is for the King of Little Tibet, a Tartar whom I have never seen, but with whom I exchanged all sorts of neighbourly courtesies last summer during my stay in Kashmir. He reigns more or less competently some hundred leagues from Kashmir.

When M. Fraser wears a shirt, he puts it on over his clothes. He is an original who really ought to be exhibited for a fee, but a very good fellow, whom I love as I do none of his other fellow-countrymen, for the reason that he feels the same friendship for me, almost as if he were an elder brother. He has killed eighty-four lions, mostly on foot or on horseback, and has had quite a lot of his hunters eaten. He has six or seven legitimate wives, but they all live together some fifty leagues from Delhi and do as they like. He must have as many children as the King of Persia, but they are all Moslems or Hindus, according to the religion and caste of their mamas, and are shepherds, peasants, mountaineers, etc., according to the occupation of their mother's family. My friend Fraser was a devil of a fellow in his day, but he is verging on the fifties, or rather the fifties have taken possession of him. He is as mild as a lamb now. If I were to describe all his eccentricities I should never come to the end of them, but he is a profound thinker withal.

The procedure which enables me to write with the same pen

for years on end consists in writing all round the point. When it ceases to be any good on one side, I write with the other, and so on *ad infinitum*. . . .

If your eyes are failing, you ought to write as much as you can with native ink, which is extremely black, on paper with a bluish or greenish tinge.

Adieu, dear Monsieur Cordier. My host used to speak Italian as well as I did. We tried to converse in that language, but to our great mortification we found that we could not.

Yours affectionately.

58

(C.F. CX)

To Captain Cordier, Chandernagore

Thana, October 18, 1832

Still at Thana, my dear Monsieur Cordier! For in this country one must not take liberties with one's intestines when they are visited with inflammation, and I want to get thoroughly well before going to Bombay. I have had dull pains in the abdomen ever since spending twelve hours in the sun, on horseback or on foot, in some most unhealthy forests and valleys. I have taken copious irrigations to deal with this trouble. Later, I added an ounce of gum in each without obtaining any visible improvement, so yesterday I plucked up my courage and dosed myself with two ounces of castor oil.

What horrible, abominable, loathsome stuff it is! But in numbers of cases it is excellent, and I flatter myself that mine is one of them. I am much better to-day, and cherish a firm hope that, if I take another dose of this execrable oil to-morrow, I shall be entirely cured.

My host asked: "Why do you not send for our doctor? He is excellent!" To which I replied: "I have no doubt of his excellence,

but it would be superfluous to give him the trouble of coming here if I were not prepared to take his medicine, for he is certain to give me a strong dose of calomel". "What better medicine could he give you?" was the reply.

Happy are those who believe in their doctor!

Is your fever at Chandernagore an intermittent one or not? I am very glad to hear that amid the dilapidated condition of people's health in general, yours and Madame Cordier's is still perfect.

A thousand thanks for the trouble you have so kindly taken in forwarding my last packet of letters to my father. . . .

. . . Adieu, dear Monsieur Cordier.

Yours affectionately.

59

(C.F. CXL)

To Captain Cordier, Chandernagore

Thana, October 27 [1832]

DEAR MONSIEUR CORDIER,

Thana, still Thana! Far more of it than I should have liked. But one cannot trifle with one's belly in this country. Soothing remedies have not sufficed. I covered myself with leeches in front and behind, which makes one very uncomfortable on horseback afterwards: blisters a foot square, but all this without managing to dislodge the enemy entirely yet. However, the day after tomorrow I am going to Bombay. Perhaps the sea air which I shall inhale there from the grand tier will do me good. Devil take the sun!

Nothing new here. During the last little while the Government has been requisitioning a good many coastal craft and turned them into quarantine ships to watch over the coast and keep the plague out on the high seas. Local politicians make out that it is to keep out the Russians, and not the plague.

No news from home.

Be so kind as to have the enclosed packet posted to the Maharajah, that is, M. Fraser, for that is one of his nicknames. He is also called Fraser the Lion, to distinguish him from twenty or so other Frasers, five or six of whom, like him, are William Frasers.

I am longing to have done with Bombay and find myself on the plateau of the Deccan once more on my way southwards. The time which I have had to spend here on account of my health may perhaps force me to do no more than pass through Goa, for which I shall be sorry.

Adieu, dear Monsieur Cordier; go on writing to me at Poona. I shall leave instructions at the post-office there for all letters which may arrive after I have left that place, to return no more, to be sent after me by fast messengers.

Yours affectionately.

60

(C.F. CXII)

To M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris

Bombay, Sick officers' quarters
December 1, 1832

DEAR PORPHYRE,

I arrived here very ill thirty-two days ago, and have been in bed thirty-one days. I caught the germ of this illness in the plague-stricken forests of the island of Salsette, where I was exposed to the glare of the sun during the most unhealthy season; though ever since passing through Ajmer in March I had had frequent attacks, as to the nature of which I was under an illusion. They were caused by inflammation of the liver. The pestilential emanations of Salsette finished me off. As soon as ever I fell ill, I made my will and set my affairs in order. The care of my interests has been entrusted to the most honourable and friendly hands, those

of M. James Nicol, an English merchant here, and M. Cordier in Calcutta.

M. Nicol was my host when I arrived in Bombay. No old friend could have lavished more affectionate care upon me. However, at the end of a few days, while I could still be moved, I left his house, which is in the fort, and moved into a convenient and spacious apartment in the sick officers' quarters, in a most airy and healthy situation by the sea-shore, a hundred paces from the house of my doctor, Dr. MacLennan, the cleverest doctor in Bombay, whose splendid care has long since made him my very dear friend.

The most cruel thing, dear Porphyre, when we think of those we love dying in distant lands, is the thought of the solitude and abandonment in which they may have spent the last hours of their life. Well, my dear, you must find some consolation in my assurance that, since arriving here, I have never ceased to have the most affectionate and touching attentions heaped upon me by a number of kind and friendly men. They are always coming to see me, gratifying my sick man's whims, and anticipating my every fancy, especially M. Nicol, M. John Bax, one of the members of the Government, an old colonel in the Engineers, M. Goodfellow, and a very nice young officer, Major Mountain, besides others whose names I do not mention.

The excellent MacLennan has almost risked his own health for my sake, for during a crisis in my illness, which for some days seemed to leave me no hope of life, he visited me twice every night.

I have the most absolute confidence in his skill.

My suffering was very great at first, but for a long time now I have relapsed into a state of weakness which is almost free from pain. The worst thing is that, during the last thirty-one days, I have not slept a whole hour in all. Yet these sleepless nights are very calm and not desperately long.

Fortunately the disease is drawing towards its close, which may not be fatal, though it more probably will be. A little time ago the abscess, or abscesses, which had originally formed inside the liver, had seemed likely to dry up by absorption; but now they

seem to be coming to a head and to be likely to burst outwards before long. I ask nothing better, if only it will put an end, in one way or the other, to the miserable state in which I have been lingering for the last month between life and death. You see that my ideas are perfectly clear. They have only been in confusion quite rarely and temporarily, during a few violent paroxysms of pain at the beginning of my illness. In general I have anticipated the worst, but this has never cast a gloom over them. My end, if it is that which is approaching, is easy and tranquil. If you were there, sitting on the edge of my bed with Father and Frédéric, my spirit would be in anguish and I should not be able to watch the coming of death with such resignation and serenity. Be comforted, and comfort our father; comfort one another, my dears.

But I am exhausted by the effort of writing. I must say adieu. Adieu! Oh, how your poor Victor loves you! Adieu for the last time!

Lying on my back, I can write only in pencil. Lest this writing may be rubbed out, the excellent M. Nicol is going to copy this letter in ink, so that I may be sure you can read my last thoughts.

VICTOR JACQUEMONT

I was able to sign what kind M. Nicol has been so good as to copy. Adieu once more, dears!

December 2, 1832

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(C.F. Vol. II, pp. 319-22)

*Letter from Mr. James Nicol, English merchant in
Bombay, to M. Porphyre Jacquemont, Paris*

[Original written in French]

Bombay, December 17, 1832

MY DEAR SIR,

Though I am a stranger to you, it has fallen to my lot to inform you of an event which you had not anticipated. It is with

the most profound regret that I am obliged to forward your brother Victor's last letter to you and give you the only consolation which can be left to you, that is, to tell you that he met the fatal blow on December 7 peacefully and without much suffering.

Your brother arrived at my house on October 29 from Thana, in a very weak state of health, after an illness which he had had a little while previously, from which he expected shortly to recover, supposing that the sea-breezes in this island would soon restore his strength. On the evening of his arrival he took a walk of half a league with me, and on the following day he made a few calls, but came back early, utterly exhausted. I advised him to consult a doctor immediately, and the same evening he was seen by Dr. Maclellan. For your satisfaction I will enclose in this letter an account of his illness written by that doctor.

As your brother himself tells you, he suffered very severely at the beginning of his illness, and was from the first aware of the dangerous nature of his malady. On November 4 he made his will, of which I enclose a copy. Towards November 8 the disease seemed to have taken a favourable turn, and he was still cherishing the hope of recovering his health, when the formation of an abscess became apparent. After that he got weaker every day, but during his whole illness he preserved a tranquillity and contentment such as I had never seen before.

I left him on December 6 very much in the same state as on previous days, but with no signs of approaching dissolution. On the 7th, however, he was seized with violent pains towards three o'clock in the morning, which lasted for about two hours. Dr. Maclellan was with him during this time. At five o'clock in the morning your brother sent for me. When I arrived he was no longer in pain, but such a great change had come over his face since the evening before that I could not restrain my tears. Taking me by the hand he said: "Do not grieve, the moment is at hand, and it is the fulfilment of my prayers. It is for this that I have been praying heaven for the last fortnight. It is a happy event. If I had to live now, the rest of my life would probably be made miserable by disease. Write to my brother, and tell him

what happiness and tranquillity accompany me to the grave! . . .”

He repeated that he desired me to forward his manuscripts and collections to France, and entered into the greatest detail with regard to his funeral, which he wished to be celebrated as though for a Protestant. He asked me to have his grave marked by a plain stone, with this inscription: “Victor Jacquemont, born in Paris on August 8, 1801, died in Bombay on December 7, 1832, after travelling for three and a half years in India”. In the course of the day he had several fits of vomiting and his breathing was considerably affected; but he retained the use of his faculties as perfectly as in good health. The only thing that troubled his mind was death, and he added: “I am well here; but I shall be far better in my grave”. Towards five o’clock in the afternoon he said to me: “I am now going to take my last drink from your hand, and die”. A violent fit of vomiting ensued, and he was laid back upon his bed completely exhausted; at times he opened his eyes, and twenty minutes before his death he seemed to recognize me. At sixteen minutes past six he yielded up his soul, falling asleep, as it were, in the arms of death.

His funeral took place on the following evening with military honours, as befitted a member of the Legion of Honour, and he was followed to his grave by the members of the Government and many other people.

I feel the deepest and sincerest sympathy with the irreparable loss which you and your father have suffered in his death. I only came to know your brother during his illness, and had nothing but the sad satisfaction of contributing as far as lay in my power towards lavishing upon him every care that his illness demanded.

In conformity with your brother’s wishes, I have had all the natural history specimens left in my possession carefully packed. They are contained in eleven packing-cases and a barrel, for which I enclose the invoice and bill of lading, signed by the captain of the French vessel *La Nymphe* of Bordeaux. I have written to the Commissaire Général of the Navy at Bordeaux, asking him to smooth away any difficulties that may arise in connexion with them. Be so good as to communicate with him about these matters.

I have also sent by this boat a box addressed to your father, containing all the writings left with me by your brother.

In the case containing his papers I have placed his order of the Legion of Honour, which your brother asked me particularly to send you. I also send you his watch and pistols.

Kindly sort out from among the other writings the catalogues referring to his collections, and hand them over to the Royal Museum.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir, etc.,

JAMES NICOL

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